

Religious Education - Cwricwlwm Cymreig

Followers of Jesus – People of the Non-Conformist Tradition in Wales.

Introduction

This pack presents an opportunity for pupils to think about the lives of five people who, as Christians in Wales in the eighteenth century, dedicated their lives to proclaiming the faith through the traditions of the non-conformist church. In the eighteenth century the non-conformist church spread rapidly throughout Wales and chapels and churches were built within walking distance of most communities.

To understand the development of Christianity in Wales, one needs to be aware of the contribution of the non-conformists and the influence they had on the everyday lives of people in the growing communities in Wales. Encouraging pupils to 'think about it' and relate their learning to religious life in Wales today will help them to understand the ecumenical nature of the Christian faith.

Learning objectives.

Pupils will;

Gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of the work of those who made a strong contribution to the development of the Christian faith and influenced the everyday lives of people who lived in Wales in the 18th/19th century.

To become aware of the vision and drive of people who encouraged others to find a commitment to the Christian faith.

To know more about the people who were instrumental in the development of the non-conformist church in Wales

To become aware of the roles that key people held as preachers, opening and running schools, the education of the people, teaching adults and children to read the Bible and giving people the opportunity to own their own Bible and to read the scriptures for themselves.

To know about the lives of William Morgan, Griffiths Jones, Daniel Rowland, Howell Harries and Mary Jones who all lived in the 18th century and contributed to the development of faith for others.

Section 1

'Think about it'– People of Wales who followed Jesus

Class activities to introduce the pupils to the theme of following Jesus.

Asking the questions

Follow Jesus! How can we follow Him when He lived 2000 years ago and in another part of the world?

We can't see Him! We can't hear Him! We can't ask Him questions!

How then can we follow Him?

Activity 1 – Game Shadow a leader.

With a partner, take it in turns to be the leader and move around the room making all sorts of shapes and movements. The one who follows has to copy the leader's actions.

Think about it!

Do you think this is what it means to follow someone?

Activity 2 – Sharing – follow an example of good behaviour

Work with your partner. Imagine you are on a school trip to the zoo and you are sitting on the bus with your friend. Your friend offers to share his/her favourite biscuits that he/she has in the picnic pack and you accept.

Think about it!

Would you find it easy to share your favourite sweets or biscuits with your friend?

Do you think to 'follow' someone is to follow their good example?

Discuss with your partner.

Activity 3. Following the example of Jesus.

We know how Jesus thought and behaved because we can read about Him in the New Testament of the Bible.

With your partner, find the evidence in the Bible that tells us about the good things Jesus did;

healing people;

caring about those who no one else liked;

helping others;

teaching people about God's love;

making special things happen.

Find the story of Zaccheus. What does that tell us about Jesus?

Find the story of the Good Samaritan. What message did Jesus give to the people when he told this parable?

Find the story of Jesus and how he healed Jairus's daughter. What does this tell us about Jesus?

Find the story of Jesus and the feeding of the five thousand. Think about this miracle performed by Jesus.

Think about the stories of Jesus!

How can we be kind and thoughtful to others?

Does listening to the stories of the life of Jesus help us in this decision?

What can we do to follow the caring ways of Jesus?

Draw or write about three ways in which you can be caring for others. Share your ideas as a group and discuss everyone's ideas about caring.

In the next section you will find information about five people of Wales who followed Jesus in their own particular way...

Section 2

People who followed Jesus

Bishop William Morgan

William Morgan translated the Bible into Welsh and became a great Bishop of the church. He was born about 1541 near Penmachno in Gwynedd. The farmhouse in which he lived with his parents was called 'Y Ty Mawr - The Big House.

Morris Wynn, the local landlord, paid for William to be educated. William went to Saint John's College, Cambridge where there were other students from Wales. He learned Latin, Greek and Hebrew. He earned extra money to help pay for his studies by working for the other students in the college. He cleared rooms, prepared meals and gave lessons to those less able than himself.

His daily routine at college was based on the monastic tradition and was a rigorous one to follow:

4.00a.m. Get up

5.00 am Start lectures

Lectures and working for the other students continued throughout the day – this included getting meals, clearing rooms and giving lessons to the less able but well off students.

Studying Hebrew

Life in college was harsh - meals consisted of small pieces of meat and bread and there were no fires in the rooms.

Bedtime 10 00pm.

Activity 1

Write out your daily routine. How does it vary from William's day?
What are the main differences?

Think about it

How difficult would it have been to keep this lifestyle going? What might have been the major things that could happen to you if you were living in such poor conditions?

What might have been the good things for William and the other students in that situation?

When William left college he became Rector of Llanbadarn and after five years in 1578 he moved to Llanrhaeadr ym Mochant, where he began his work on translating the Bible into Welsh.

In 1567 the New Testament had been translated into Welsh by William Salesbury, Richard Davies, Bishop of St Asaph and Thomas Huet. But the version was not written for ordinary Welsh speakers and contained many words in Latin and Welsh words not used in everyday conversation.

William Morgan wanted to make a translation into a Welsh language that ordinary people could understand. Queen Elizabeth 1st. supported his work and agreed that the language of the Bible had to be a language which all Welsh people could read and understand.

The Welsh Bible became the centre of Welsh life.

William completed the translation in 1588 and went up to London to supervise the printers who did not speak Welsh. For his work on providing the people of Wales with their own Bible, William was made Bishop of Llandaff in 1595 and it was there, in 1599, that he translated the Book of Common Prayer into Welsh. In 1601 he was made Bishop of St Asaph and died there in 1604.

Think about it!

William Morgan must have worked many long hours to translate the Bible into Welsh. He had to be very careful when changing the text into Welsh that he kept to the true meanings of the words in the Bible. Have you tried changing the words in the Bible into your own words? It is not easy. Try it

Activity

Choose a story that you know well from either the Old Testament or the New Testament. Read it carefully then write it in your own words.

Check that you have not left anything out and the words you use really do mean the same as the words in the Bible.

William Morgan's translation of the Bible helped people in Wales to know more about the life and actions of those who lived in Old Testament times and of God's unfailing love for them. Reading the stories of the life and teachings

of Jesus in the New Testament helped them to come closer to Him and follow Him in their lives.

There is a memorial plaque commemorated to William Morgan in Llandaff Cathedral and in St Asaph he was included in a memorial to the Welsh translators of the Bible which is situated outside of the Cathedral.

He will be remembered by the people of Wales for this great work which not only enabled Welsh people to read the Bible in their own language but also played an important part in keeping the Welsh language alive and influential in the writing and music of the Welsh culture which enhances our life today.

Mary Jones

Mary Jones played an important role in the 18th century in the promotion of the Bible as a book for everyone to read. It was because of her efforts to achieve a Bible of her own that the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed which to this day prints Bibles in many world languages and ensures that it is available in all parts of the world.

Mary was born in Llanfihangel y Pennant in 1784- 220 years ago. She lived with her mother and father who were weavers. They worked long hours and earned very little money, so Mary and her parents were really very poor. Every Sunday Mary and her mother went to the chapel to join in the services. There Mary learned to pray to God, sing hymns and find out more about the life and teachings of Jesus.

As Mary grew older she helped her mother in the house and in the garden. She helped to grow the vegetables and looked after the hens. The food they produced in this small way was sold in the town to make an extra income.

Think about it!

Do you help everyday in your house and garden?

What kind of things do you do to help?

Are they different to the work that Mary did?

Activity 1 Draw or write about the way in which you help in your home.

Mary's parents could not read or write. They did not have the opportunity to go to school – but Mary was lucky she could attend school. A man named Griffith Jones started a circulating school which went from town to town during the winter months when people were not working so hard in the fields and gardens. Both children and adults learned to read at the school. They learned by reading the Bible together.

Think about it!

Do you think it was easy to read the words in the Bible?

Do you think there were many difficult words to read?

Activity 2

Take a Bible and choose a page. Carefully read about ten or fifteen verses on that page.

Think about it!

How did you get on? Was it easy to read? Could you read all the words? Were there any really difficult words to work out?

Activity 3.

In a group, give each member of the group a Bible. Turn to the Old Testament section and find the Book of Genesis. Look for the story of Noah and the great flood. Read the story together.

Think about it!

Was it easy for everyone in the group to keep up? Did people find a variety of words difficult to read? What were the problems of learning to read in this way?

Mary learned to read the Bible and she so loved all the great stories that she wished for a copy of her own. But her parents were too poor to buy a copy. She would have to work hard and earn some money of her own to buy a Bible.

Think about it!

Do you have a favourite book? How do you think it would feel if you could not read your book whenever you wanted to?

Reverend Thomas Charles of Bala took on the travelling school and in 1799 persuaded the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) to print 10,000 copies of the Bible. Although Bibles became widely available Mary's parents could not afford to buy a copy.

Mrs Evans, a farmer's wife, who lived near Mary, allowed Mary to come and read her copy of the Bible which she kept in her home. This gave Mary a lot of pleasure but she always kept wishing for a copy of her own.

Mary worked hard and saved all that she earned until in 1800 she had earned enough to buy her very own Bible.

Mary planned to make the journey to Bala to buy a Bible from the Reverend Thomas Charles. She walked the long journey, mostly in her bare feet, because it was important to keep her shoes for special occasions. When she eventually reached the town of Bala and found the house of Thomas Charles she was disappointed to find that he did not have any Bibles to spare.

Activity 4

Work out how old Mary was when she had saved enough money to buy a Bible.

Look at a map of Wales and find out how many miles Mary had to walk to reach Bala from Llanfihangel. Plot the journey on the map.

Think about it!

What kind of journey do you think that was for Mary? She had to walk alone.

What kind of experiences might there have been for Mary on that journey?

How might she have felt when she realised there was not a copy of a Bible for her?

Has anything happened in your life that made you feel very sad or disappointed?

Thomas Charles felt very sorry for Mary when he saw how disappointed she was that there was no copy of the Bible available for her. When he realised how far she had travelled and how much this journey had meant to her he gave her his own Bible. Mary was overjoyed and made her journey home a very happy person.

Think about it!

How do you think Mary must have felt when she received her first copy of a Bible?

Have you had a gift that was very special to you? How did you feel? Write either about Mary's feelings when she received her Bible or how you felt when you had something very special given to you.

Mary's determination to own a Bible of her own helped Thomas Charles to realize just how much it meant to people to own a Bible and be able to read it whenever they wished. He decided to fund the British and Foreign Bible Society which printed Bibles in many world languages.

Think about it

Mary's actions brought about a result which affected many people of the world. It made it possible to own a Bible written in your own language.

*Is there anything we could do to make a difference for people?
Think of something which you and your friends could do to help others
and make a difference for them*

*you might raise funds for a charity ;
you might help old people in your area;
you might help with something in your school which would make
a difference for everyone.
you might want to do something at home which would benefit
your family.*

Activity.

Discuss ideas with your friends and draw up a plan of the things you want to do. Use the following questions to help you.

Who is going to benefit from your actions?
What are you going to do?
Where is the action going to take place?
Who do you need to talk to?
Who is going to be involved?
What is each person going to do?
How much time are you going to give to this project?
How will you start the action?
How will you carry it through?
How will the action end and how will you know that your plan has been achieved?
Can you think of any problems you may come up against when you do this activity?

Griffith Jones – the travelling school

Griffith Jones was a great preacher of his time and a great supporter of the travelling school which gave people the opportunity to learn to read the Bible and to follow the way of life the Bible taught. He spent his life preaching and teaching the Bible and began the Methodist revival in Wales.

Born in Penboyr, Dyfed in 1683 he became a wood turner who made wooden dishes. He attended Carmarthen Grammar School and in 1708 was ordained a priest at Brecon Cathedral. The Bishop of Brecon, Bishop Bull, told him to become a teacher and help people to read the Bible. As this was what he had always wanted to do he became a teacher at the S.P.C.K. school in Laugharne where he was appointed as curate.

The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge had been founded in 1699 to organise charity schools to help poor people to read and write. Unfortunately, the teaching was in English not Welsh, and was therefore not as effective as it might have been.

Whilst, he enjoyed preaching and drew huge crowds to listen to his sermons, often held outdoors because there were too many people for the church building, which did not please the church at the time, he was aware that people needed to follow up his preaching by reading the scriptures for themselves. He realized that schools were needed to teach both children and adults just the basics of reading in Welsh.

From about 1737 he trained teachers and sent them out all over Wales where they set up schools for about three months in each place, gave reading lessons to adults and children and then moved on. These lessons were held mostly in the winter when children were not needed to help with the farm work. Sometimes they were held in the evening when everyone could come.

Think about it!

How do you think it must have felt to go to school and learn to read when there had been no chance to do so before? Do you think people felt excited or nervous?

Can you think how it feels when you are unable to read a book, a magazine, a newspaper or the text on the television?

Activity

Put yourself in the shoes of a child in Wales in 1737 when the school was coming to your village for three months in the winter. How do you think you would feel when you do not really know what a school is? Write a conversation between yourself and your friend when you are working on the farm, on the prospect of the school coming to the village.

When Griffith Jones died in 1761 over 150 thousand people had been taught to read by the travelling schools. This was a tremendous achievement for the people of Wales.

Daniel Rowland – a great preacher.

Daniel was born in Llangeitho, Dyfed, in 1713. He was the son of a parish priest and he had one brother John. They both became priests. Daniel attended Hereford Grammar School and in 1735 was ordained a priest. He worked for a while as a curate for his brother John.

In the early years of his ministry Daniel Rowland was not a great preacher or even good priest until in 1735 Griffith Jones came to preach in Llandewi Brefi. Griffith's obvious great love of God and his teaching on the importance of following Jesus if one was to have a good life, influenced Daniel deeply and he became converted.

Think about it!

Have you listened to someone speaking who has really caught your attention and you enjoyed listening? Did you think about what you heard and wondered about it all?

Activity

Write about your feelings and thoughts when you listened to the speaker. Describe anything you have done differently because of what you heard.

After his contact with Griffith Jones, Daniel Rowland became a new man and began to preach to the people with renewed energy and feeling. He was inspirational to others when he told them how they could be saved from their sins if they followed Jesus. He teamed up with a man called Howell Harris and joined up with William Williams the great Welsh hymn writer.

In 1760 Daniel had a separate building erected for the meeting of the Methodist Association. At this time the Bishop sacked him for moving away from the church.

Daniel continued to preach in the chapel that had been built for him and in 1764 a larger chapel was built on the site because the first one was too small to house all those who came to hear him preach. It was called Gwynfil Chapel and he preached there until his death in 1790.

Today there is a statue of Daniel Rowland on the site of the chapel to commemorate his great contribution to the faith and to Non Conformist movement in Wales.

Think about it!

What effect do you think the great preachers had on the people of Wales? Can you imagine the large groups coming to listen to them preach and going away feeling inspired by the messages they had heard from the speakers? In what way do you think people may have changed their way of life because of what they heard from the scriptures?

Activity

Draw or paint a picture of these great gatherings of priest and people in the chapels; or write a letter to someone about the events, write a newspaper article or compose a poem which describes the feelings of the people at these great gatherings in Wales.

Howell Harris -a great organiser of the Methodist movement.

Howell Harris was born in Trefeca, Powys. His brother Joseph and his aunt paid for Howell to attend Llwyn-llwyd Academy in 1728. He passed the examination to attend St Mary's Hall at Oxford but chose instead to be a school teacher at Talgarth.

At first he was not a good person or even a good teacher but in 1731 he listened to the vicar of Talgarth preach about sinful ways and realised how badly behaved he had been. He became determined to change his ways.

Howell began to preach to the people but the vicar stopped him because he was not ordained as a priest. Howell went to Griffiths Jones who told him about the different religious societies which were being formed and in 1736 Howell founded his first society at Llandefalle north of Brecon. In 1737 he met Daniel Rowland and they joined forces.

Howell Harris became one of the great organisers of the Methodist movement in Wales and Daniel Rowland was one of the great preachers of Methodism. They worked closely with William Williams, the great Methodist hymn writer, who lived in Pantycelyn. They toured mid and South Wales together and met up with the English Methodist leaders John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield.

The first Methodist Association Meeting was held near Llandovery in 1742. Howell Harris was appointed a Superintendent of the movement. A joint meeting of the Welsh Methodist Movement and the followers of George Whitefield met at Watford near Caerphilly.

They decided not to break away from the Anglican church and worked closely with George Whitefield who believed that John Calvin's idea that salvation was only available to those previously chosen by God. The Wesleyan Methodist believed that all can be saved.

Howell Harris retired to Trefeca in 1752 where he set up a 'Family' commune. This was for men and women who wanted to live separately from the outside world. They followed their trades and spent much time in meditation and prayer. The whole place became like a Methodist Monastery where Howell Harris called everyone to prayer three times a day.

There was a very strict daily routine for everyone to follow;

4.00a.m. Get up, eat breakfast and listen to a sermon

6.00p.m. Go to work and call the children to breakfast and work

10.00a.m. Children's mealtime

12 00 midday. Dinner for the men in the fields

2.00p.m. Sermon then all back to work
8.00p.m. Supper for the children
8.30p.m. Evening service
9.00p.m Supper and discussion
10.00p.m. Bed time.

This organisation was a great success with about 120 people in the group. The group was disbanded in 1840 when the main building was converted into a Theological training college for Methodist ministers.

During the threat of invasion from France in 1758/59 Howell Harris joined the militia and went to Great Yarmouth. He was promoted to Captain but still continued to preach. When he returned to Wales in 1762 the Methodist leaders asked if he would again work for the movement. They desperately needed a leader to keep the whole movement together.

From 1771 Howell Harris stayed in Trefeca where he became ill and eventually died in 1773. He is buried at Talgarth.

Think about it!

There were many great people who followed the Christian faith in Wales in the 17th and 18th century. Many followed the Methodist movement, preaching the gospels to people and teaching them that they must follow Jesus in their lives. But they were different in the way they practised their faith. They relied more on the capability of the leaders to preach with conviction and to enthuse and inspire the people to live the chosen way. The services were different to those of the Anglican church at the time. They built different buildings called chapels and made themselves separate from the Anglican church.

This has had a great influence on the how the Christian faith is practised in Wales. Discuss with your friends what the positives and negatives might be in turning away from the major church and what and who might gain from this.

Activity

Select one of the characters in this resource pack and write a letter from that person to a friend telling them about his or her life. Describe the issues they face and the feelings they have.

Visiting Places of Worship

The Christian Church

Teacher's Notes

The Non Conformist Church in Wales (Cwricwlwm Cymreig)

Exploring the diversity of denominational worship that exists in world religions helps pupils to be aware of the whole spectrum of religious faith in the world. Addressing the Cwricwlwm Cymreig and taking Christianity as a focus for this project, it is valuable for pupils to know more about the growth of Non-Conformity in Wales during the 18th century and what motivated people to move away from the established church at that time.

Visiting a range of places of worship, which represent the different Christian denominations in this country, provides an effective learning resource for pupils. The characteristics of the buildings and the distinctive worship which takes place in each situation helps pupils to understand not only the diversity of practice but also the deep commitment to God and the Christian way of life presented within that diversity.

Pupils should have the opportunity to visit the range of churches in their area; Anglican, Roman Catholic and the Non-Conformist Churches. Exploring the similarities and differences contained in denominational worship will enable pupils to respect diversity and gain a deeper understanding of the common ground shared by all- Congregationalists, Unitarians, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, the Quaker Movement and the Salvation Army.

The history of the breakaway from the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church is a chequered one. It began in the 16th century when groups of people became aware that the church did not really answer their faith needs and they began to express their need for change. They became known as the Protestant Church (the protestors).

Henry VIII had set himself up as the Head of the Church of England and separated from the Church of Rome. Many harsh changes were made but changing the language of the services from Latin to English enabled ordinary people to understand the service. During the time of Elizabeth 1st, Puritanism came into being - Presbyterians and Separatists – who wanted more power for the people and to use more simple forms of worship. Elizabeth 1st asked William Morgan to translate the Bible into the Welsh language suitable for needs of ordinary Welsh people.

In Wales, the Non-Conformists church grew in strength and became very influential in the lives of the people. Listening to the scriptures and following the teachings of Jesus, set specific values and attitudes by which to live. Places of worship were built in various styles that soon became identifiable as a denominational building and they can still be seen today dotted across the countryside.

Whilst the Non-Conformist's church has become far less influential over the past century, the life values it presented still echo in the lives of the people in many parts of Wales today and non-conformist churches are still open and active in some areas.

So what are the main differences in denominational church buildings and the worship which takes place inside?

The English-speaking Non-Conformists worship in buildings called churches and the Welsh Non-Conformists worship in chapels or 'capels'. The Non-Conformist leaders do not wear special clothes but may wear a stiff collar. The Holy Communion is celebrated differently to that in the Anglican Church. Whilst choirs and music support the services there is not the same emphasis on the Liturgy as there is in the Anglican Church. The service is less formal and does not always follow a set order. A series of services follow a theme and there are different styles of worship for various occasions.

Though the buildings vary and there are some differences in the way the Christian faith is practiced in each denomination, all groups hold the importance of the Bible, God and Jesus and share the use of prayer, scripture, reflection and times of celebration. The importance of the pulpit and preaching has been the main difference in the development of the Non-Conformist church.

In the Non-Conformist church there is no central leadership such as a Pope or Bishop. Congregations are led by a group of 'elders' who form part of the independent local, self governance system by which the churches and chapels are run.

Planning visits to places of worship.

The main aim of a visit to a Non-Conformist church is for pupils to become aware of the religious belief, values and lifestyle followed by the faith community.

Opportunities to explore the building, study its design, explore the religious artefacts, talk to individuals who belong to the congregation and find out what it means to be a member of that religious community will enable pupils to gain in awareness of the faith life of the people who worship there.

It is important to contact a member of the community before you visit to ask permission, set the date and time and make a request for members to be there to talk to the pupils and answer their questions. Check on any restrictions for pupils in exploring the building and any rules to follow.

The pupils should be given full information on the planned experience and what they are going to do when they arrive at the building. They should be aware of the expected behaviour and encouraged to respect the building and the faith group they are visiting.

It is important to say thank you at the end of the time and if possible encourage pupils to send the community a selection of their responses to the visit. This is always welcomed by the faith community.

Included in this pack are worksheets to direct pupils learning when visiting places of worship. They can also be used as an assessment tool for pupils learning and achievement.

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¹ September 2004-09-12

Name.....

Exploring a Place of Worship.

Stop before you enter the building and look for the following information;

The name of the building.....

The year it was built.....

The name of the minister.....

The times of the services.....

Any other information.....

Make a quick sketch of the building.

Name.....

Exploring a Place of Worship

The Outside

Describe what you see.

What materials were used?

Are there any signs that the building has been refurbished?

Does the building look well cared for? Why?

What does this tell us about the people who worship there?

Name.....

Exploring Places of Worship

Inside

The Porch/Doorway

Note all the information you can see about what goes on this building.

**E.g. notices .. pictures .. events .. celebrations
people and what they do.**

Name.....

Exploring Places of Worship

Worship

What can you find that shows what kind of worship takes place in this building?

1. Prayer

2. Teaching

3. Music and Singing

4. Special meal

5. Silence

Name.....

Exploring Places of Worship

The Bible

Which type of Bible is being used in this building?

Where are the Bibles kept?

When are they used?

Who uses them?

Name.....

Exploring Places of Worship

Symbols

How many symbols of the Christian faith can you find in this building?

Draw the symbols

Name the symbols

Describe what the symbol represents.

Religious Education

Cwricwlwm Cymreig

The Non-Conformist Church in Wales

A Resource for Key Stage 2

**Marion Richards B Ed M Ed Dip RD OU
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