



Reflecting on clocks

Clocks are relatively recent additions to churches. Some churches also have a mass dial or sundial, either in the graveyard or carved on the side of the church wall.

You could use this...

- To fit in with a topic on time
- To reflect on changing time in history, or travelling back in time to a specific period you are studying
- To encourage children to think about good and bad times in their pasts
- To reflect on things that change and things that stay the same
- To explore group relationships

Bible passages

- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 Everything has its time





Watch the whole slide show

It may be appropriate to show all the photos a few times, with a fresh question for each showing. If you do this, pause between showings to allow the children to move their thinking from the old to the new question.

- Which is the oldest clock?
- Which is the newest clock?
- Why do churches have clocks?
- We talk about 'around the clock' for things that happen 24 hours a day. What things happen around the clock? What things don't happen around the clock?

Show one photo

Choose one photo that reflects the theme of the questions you are asking. If you are using more than one question for the photo, allow plenty of time between questions so the children don't feel rushed.

The first clock

- Imagine life without knowing what time it is.
- Imagine a life where the church bells tell you everything you need to know about the time, where you are governed by the sun and the

weather.

- What difference would it have made to life in the village when the first clock was installed?
- When might the church clock still be useful today?

Time

- Time keeps passing, it is a constant. What are the constants in your life? What difference do they make? How do you value them?
- We sometimes use the expression, 'frozen in time', for things that have stayed the same. What part of your life would you like to be frozen in time?
- 'Time stands still'. When has time stood still for you? If you could make time stand still, when would you use your power?
- What period in history would you like to travel back in time to?
- Putting back the clock. If you could put the clock back to a specific time in your life, what time would you choose? What would you like to change at that period? What was so good about that time? What do you remember about that time?
- Clocks can give a sense of urgency about time? What is urgent for you at the moment?
- Now is the time to . . . How would you finish this . . . for you . . . for the world?

Clock mechanisms

- The parts of a clock all work together to make the hands move at the correct speed. What groups do you work together in? How do you fit into the group? What part do you play? What part would you like to play? What holds all the parts together? How do you make sure you get the required result?
- Look at the cog wheels. Which wheel is most like you? What impact do you have on others? What

impact do they have on you?

- All the parts are different shapes, colours and materials. What value does each have . . . to the clock . . . to you looking on?
- Can you see the maker's mark? It tells us who made the clock and where they were based. Who is your maker? What marks did your maker give you? How can we tell who your maker is and where they are?
- Clocks have mechanisms to stop them going too slow or too fast, to make sure they work well and as they should. What are the things that stop you going wrong?
- The clock mechanism is hidden behind the clock face which everyone sees. Are you like the mechanism (behind the scenes), or the clock face (always on show)? Which would you rather be?

Sundials

- What does a sundial say about life at the time they were used?
- What do they say about pace of life?
- What does the way we measure time say about our lives?
- Which would you prefer, a watch, a clock or a sundial?



Imagine

Show one of the photographs of a clock mechanism.

Ask the children to imagine being in front of the mechanism as it works.

What can you hear?

Watch the wheels; some are going quickly, some slowly. Be aware of the rhythm of the clock. Listen to the clicks and ticks and noises of the clock.

Smell the oily mechanism.

Watch the pendulum swing, see the axles rotate as they turn the hands of the clock slowly round.

Watch how it all connects and works together.

You see a lever, and gently pull it. Slowly the clock stops. The ticking and clicking is silenced, the axles become still, the wheels slow and stop.

Everything in the church is still. Listen. Everything outside is still. There is no traffic, no birds, no people moving. You have stopped time. How does that feel?

What are you going to do while time stands still? You could;

- Stay where you are and enjoy the peace and stillness without time.
- Go outside and see everything frozen in time. Where could you go? What could you do? What implications might there be for anything you change?
- Go into the church. God is there, outside time. He calls you over. What does he say to you? What do you say to him?
- Panic and turn the lever back.

When you are ready go back to the clock. How do you feel as you look at the lever that will start time again? How did it feel outside time?

Push the lever back and watch as the clock starts up again and listen as the noise begins again.

Walk away from the clock and back to this room.



Reflecting on church buildings

These reflections are designed to encourage children to think about and to approach aspects of church buildings from a different perspective. Each gives a series of questions to encourage children's thinking, followed by a longer imaginative exercise, in which they are invited to imagine being in the picture and often have an imaginary conversation with someone about some aspect of the church building. In this they are encouraged to notice how they feel about the building and to see it from a different viewpoint. Many of the questions will fit in well in the 'Learning from religion' strand of the RE syllabus and give opportunities for reflecting and considering. They will also work well in PSHE sessions. Suggestions have been given for times when some of the reflections might be particularly relevant for the children, or appropriate for their learning.

You may choose to show the entire slide show and give the pupils one question to think about as they watch. Or the photographs could be printed out and paper copies displayed for children to use, or as the focus on a display using some of the questions the children have been exploring. You could show the slide show more than once, posing a different question with each showing. Sometimes the questions follow on from each other, others are unconnected.

Rather than showing the series of photographs in the slide show, you could choose one photograph (or use a photo of a similar feature in your local church) and choose a few questions from one section to ask the children. If you visit a church you could use the reflection as part of your session in the church and use the real objects as the focus rather than the photographs.

If pupils are not used to working in this way, you may need to give them some pointers first, or model your thoughts, but emphasise that there is no 'right' answer to the questions, and that their experience is valuable, even if it is completely different to anyone else's. It is a space for their personal reflections.

Some sections will be more appropriate for use in church schools. Use your judgement on which is suitable for your school context and your pupils.

After the reflection allow children the opportunity to share something of what they were thinking about if they want to, but also give them permission not to share it. For some pupils deep issues might be raised and they might prefer to talk to you or another member of staff about this quietly later.

The reflections could be used alongside a story for collective worship, and Bible references are given for related passages you might include.