

Remembrance Sunday – 8th November 2020

Read Isaiah 2.2-5

You may like to use this material as a basis for discussion in your family.

As we approach Remembrance Sunday people wear red poppies which symbolise our remembrance of those who have died as a result of war or conflict. These symbols were introduced after the First World War to remind people of the horror of war and to give thanks for those who fought to maintain peace in our country.



The red poppy symbol comes from the fields of northern France and Belgium where a lot of the fighting took place.

Have you ever tried taking one of the poppies apart? When I was a child I used to like de-constructing mine. I always got into trouble with my parents for doing this; they thought that I was being disrespectful. But I wanted to see how it was made and each part of the poppy seemed to represent something different.

Here are my ideas:

The red petals – they are red because they indicate the blood of those who died. There are usually two main petals joined together. I like to think of one of these as the service men and women who gave their lives in the conflict, and the other as the civilians who died because they lived in places that were attacked.

The green stalk and leaf – they represent the new growth of communities after the conflict. They are symbols of hope for the future.

The black button which forms the centre of the flower – black is a sign of grief. We often wear black clothes at funerals to indicate our sadness and loss. But this black button at the centre of the poppy also holds everything together and so I like to think of this as the strength of people in communities working together to overcome the grief and sadness. The black button at the centre is also a reminder of God at the centre of our lives holding all our memories of the past and our hopes for the future.

These are just my ideas. What do you think? Can you think of other ways in which the parts of the poppy tell the story of Remembrance Sunday?

Have you heard of white poppies that represent peace? They can be used to pray for peace in the world and for people who work for peace in different charities and organisations.

Activities

- Many years ago plants and flowers had symbolic meanings. The herb Rosemary was called the herb of remembrance. It is an evergreen herb, staying green throughout the year. Our memories are like that – they stay with us year after year. Find a sprig of rosemary – from

your garden or from the supermarket – and rub it between your fingers. As you inhale the smell be aware of the presence of God and say a prayer for all those we remember today.

- On the outline of the poppy write a short phrase or prayer on each petal. On one petal write a prayer for those who have died as a result of war or conflict. On the other petal write a prayer for peace.

Prayer

Lord of all time and space,
we remember today
those who died long ago in the service of
their country;
those who died in
far-away places;
those who died in
this country;
and those who have
died in recent
conflicts.
May their memory
stay fresh in our
lives and in our
prayers. Amen

