

Fressingfield Primary Our Reflection Shed



Why a Reflection Shed?
We already have a prayer table
– shouldn't that be enough?





Well actually, no.

A Reflection Shed would be a whole (small) room for children to visit. It would be in the playground, with grounds to develop around it, and would be a proper place for children to 'just be', not just a small table.

It would also be, in time, a place where children would be able to 'be in charge' and 'make decisions'. So, rather than 'our place', it would be 'their place'. The children are already used to organising and performing whole school assemblies. They are now ready for a bit more!

What did we do first?

- Simple; we bought a shed. And, whilst I was out on a course one day, it amazingly erected itself. Well, we say God works in mysterious ways!
- And, on the next day of my course, the shed had painted itself! (It's what happens when we work together as a team!
- We decided to put it in our new (not-quite-finished) sensory garden, so it would have some grounds to develop. Also, we would be able to create some outside activities.
- We chose a shed with a big frontage, so the sun could stream in, and the door could open wide.

Notice the large doors which open, and also the patio area, the seating and the raised beds – lots of potential for developing the Shed outdoors!



Incidentally, our Shed is in the corner of our Sensory Garden, a work in progress. We are working alongside both children and 'friends of the school' to develop our new garden over time.



How did we decorate it?

- Miss Debenham reckoned that sky blue was a cheerful colour, so sky blue it was!
- We started, as you do, with some older children painting it. We used wood paint inside. It wasn't cheap, and the interior wood was thirsty, so we went through several tins (at least 4).
- And, like many things, the children start it, but an adult needs to improve it. DIY isn't always as easy as it looks.
- We wanted a carpet. We had some spare, but needed someone to fit it. I asked a lot of carpet fitters if they wanted to do it for free, or for God, but strange, they all seemed to be busy!

- In the end, we painted it the same colour as the walls.
- We knew there would be a lot of footfall, so I also bought a brush and dustpan and a big broom (these were the best buys ever, in hindsight)!
- I also bought a large rainbow-coloured rug, that could be thrown in the washing machine at the end of each half term. That was another great buy. It was about £6 – money well spent!

All ready to go ...

I needed to think of a great start-up theme. All this was happening in and out of lockdowns. And, bearing in mind the mat inside was rainbow coloured, guess what our theme was?

Yes, **RAINBOWs!!!**

Here are some of the activities we put inside. We needed to appeal to all ages and all different children. We wanted to attract the curious, and also entice those children who might otherwise be tearing around the playground playing Tag or football.

Handmade Rainbow

Do you like our 'handmade rainbow'? Congo Class has started it, but maybe it needs a little more colour?

Choose your favourite colour, draw carefully around your hand, then stick it on the correct place on the rainbow.

Great work!



Can you make your own rainbow from a prism?

Shine a torch through a transparent prism, and hold a piece of white card in front of the refracted ray of light as it leaves the prism. What do you see?



Noah's Ark

During Noah's lifetime, people were acting very wickedly. This made God unhappy. It made Him sad because people seemed to be thinking more about themselves than about God. Noah, however, was a good man. He loved and obeyed God. And God loved Noah very much. God actually loved all the people as much as He loved Noah - but at the time, only Noah was listening to God.

God told Noah to build an ark - a big boat. So Noah and a half football fields long. That's a huge boat! Noah's neighbours laughed at him because there wasn't any water in the desert where they lived. But God told Noah that a great flood was coming. Noah tried to warn the people to change their ways so that they could hear God too. But they wouldn't listen. They just kept on with their selfish lives.

God asked Noah to collect two of all the creatures of the earth and bring them into the ark. He also told the animals to find Noah - so it wasn't hard for Noah to gather them together. Pairs of each kind of animal were put safely inside the ark before it began to rain. Noah's wife, and his three sons, and their wives were also safe on the boat. When everyone was aboard, God shut the door.

Noah and his family and the animals lived in the ark for seven days before the first rain drops fell. Then it rained for forty days and forty nights. Soon the earth was covered with water. After it stopped raining, the water continued to rise for 150 days. The ark landed in the mountain range of Ararat during the seventh month of the flood. God sent a big wind and the waters began to evaporate. Noah and the floating zoo had to stay in the ark for several more months while the earth slowly dried out.

Finally, Noah sent a raven out of the ark's window to look for land. The raven never returned. Noah waited another week for the water level to go down and then sent a dove to do the same thing. The dove couldn't find a place to rest, so it returned to the ark. Another week passed, and then Noah sent the dove out again. This time it came back with an olive branch. Noah now knew that the water was low enough for a tree branch to show! When Noah sent off the dove a week later, it didn't return. The dove had found a place to live - on dry land.

Altogether, Noah and his family and the animals lived on the ark for 1 year, 1 month, and 27 days!

It was now time for all the creatures and Noah's family to move off the ark. Noah and his family and the animals needed to start the world over again. After everyone left the ark, Noah prayed to God to thank him for keeping them safe. Suddenly a bright rainbow filled the sky. This was God's promise that He would never flood the earth again.

Promises

Some Christians believe the story of Noah's Ark is true, whilst others believe it is simply a great story, but with a very important promise. God promises that he will never flood the earth again, and that if you are good, you will look after us.

Promise Pebbles

Look at these pebbles.

Pick them up.

Feel their texture. Are they rough/smooth?
Are they hot or cold?
Do you like the feel of them?

Each pebble has words on, to make you think of different things.

Can you choose a word that you would really like to think hard about? Hold that pebble in your hand, maybe close your eyes, then imagine your promise. What promise can you make?

Say quietly to yourself, "I promise to..."

Maybe you might use these words to help you with your promise:
kindness love respect try remember hope

Every Reflection Shed needs a Prayer Tree ...

... but our Prayer Tree is feeling a bit lonely and bare right now.

Can you ...

Add a short prayer on one of the leaves!

What sort of prayer will you add?

- A **thank you prayer** (maybe, Thank you for my friends, or my family or my school)
- A **help me prayer** (if you might need help with something)
- A **sorry prayer** (if you did something you maybe wish you hadn't)

You can start your prayer with any of these:

Dear

God

Dear

Father

Or,

Dear

Jesus

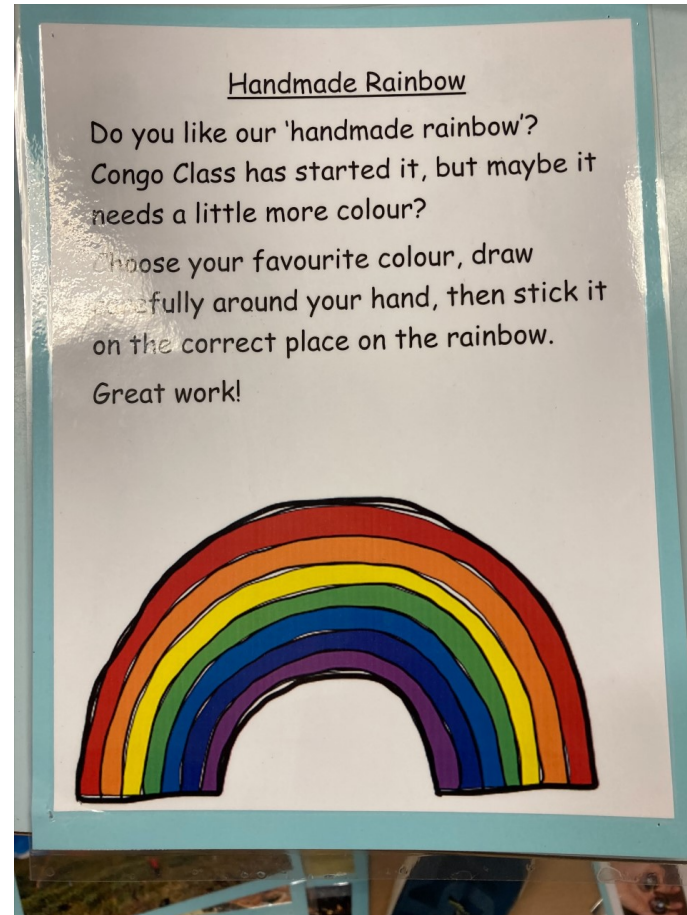
And remember to write Amen at the end!

Can you ...

Decorate our Prayer Tree with beautiful colours!



A collaborative activity; older children love organising younger children. We put glue, scissors and coloured paper into a tub, and let the children get on with it.



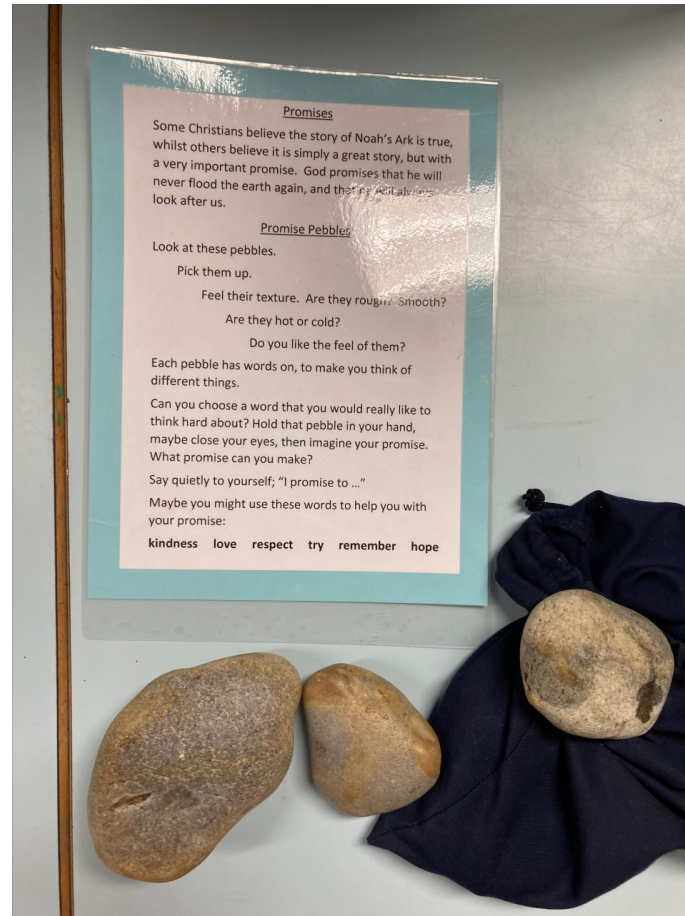
Bright, attractive pictures (laminated to reuse); these are great for not-yet readers, or children who just come in to look, rather than engaging deeply.



Bunting; a bit of bunting is always great (and cheap). It attracts everyone and cheers us up.




Pebbles; these are so tactile. I might write on them with a Sharpie (eg to pray for friends, family, a pet, etc) or just have them for children to hold and be mindful.



Yes, every Reflection Shed needs a **Prayer Tree**. And we like to vary things each half-term. Paper clips can be a bit fiddly, but older children are there to help younger children. We have had stars, different colour post-its, paper with a shiny back ...

Every Reflection Shed needs a Prayer Tree ...




... but our Prayer Tree is feeling a bit lonely and bare right now.
Can you ...
Add a short prayer on one of the leaves?
What sort of prayer will you add?
- A thank you prayer (maybe, Thank you for my Friends, or my family or my school?)
- A help me prayer (if you might need help with something)
- A sorry prayer (if you did something you maybe wish you hadn't)
You can start your prayer with any of these:

Dear
God

Dear
Father

Or,
Dear
Jesus

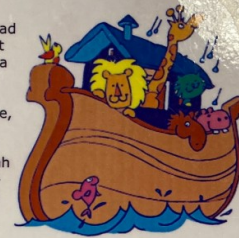


And remember to write **Amen** at the end!
Can you ...
Decorate our Prayer Tree with beautiful colours?
Use the scissors and wool to make our tree the **BEST EVER!!!**

A Bible story; some children have taken these outside to read, like a book, in the sunshine.

Noah's Ark

During Noah's lifetime, people were acting very wickedly. This made God unhappy. It made Him sad because people seemed to be thinking more about themselves than about God. Noah, however, was a good man. He loved and obeyed God. And God loved Noah very much. God actually loved all the people as much as He loved Noah - but at the time, only Noah was listening to God.



God told Noah to build an ark - a big boat. So Noah followed God's plan and built a boat that was one-and-a-half football fields long. That's a huge boat! Noah's neighbours laughed at him because there wasn't any water in the desert where they lived. But God told Noah that a great flood was coming. Noah tried to warn the people to change their ways so that they could hear God too. But they wouldn't listen. They just kept on with their selfish lives.

God asked Noah to collect two of all the creatures of the earth and bring them into the ark. He also told the animals to find Noah - so it wasn't hard for Noah to gather them together. Pairs of each kind of animal were put safely inside the ark before it began to rain. Noah's wife, and his three sons, and their wives were also safe on the boat. When everyone was aboard, God shut the door.

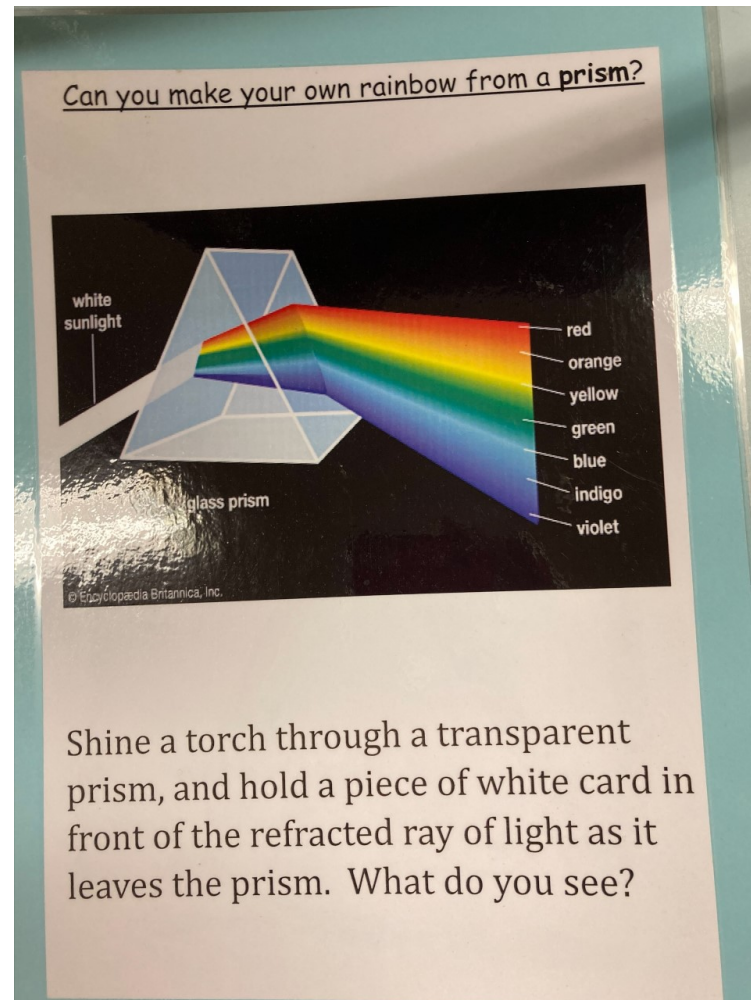
Noah and his family and the animals lived in the ark for seven days before the first rain drops fell. Then it rained for forty days and forty nights. Soon the earth was covered with water. After it stopped raining, the water continued to rise for 150 days. The ark landed in the mountain range of Ararat during the seventh month of the flood. God sent a big wind and the waters began to evaporate. Noah and the floating zoo had to stay in the ark for several more months while the earth slowly dried out.

Finally, Noah sent a raven out of the ark's window to look for land. The raven never returned. Noah waited another week for the water level to go down and then sent a dove to do the same thing. The dove couldn't find a place to rest, so it returned to the ark. Another week passed, and then Noah sent the dove out again. This time it came back with an olive branch. Noah now knew that the water was low enough for a tree branch to show! When Noah sent off the dove a week later, it didn't return. The dove had found a place to live - on dry land.

Altogether, Noah and his family and the animals lived on the ark for 1 year, 1 month, and 27 days!

It was now time for all the creatures and Noah's family to move off the ark. Noah and his family and the animals needed to start life over again. After everyone left the ark, Noah prayed to God to thank Him for keeping them safe. Suddenly a bright rainbow filled the sky. This was God's promise that He would never flood the earth again.

Something a bit curious; to entice those who just come 'for a look'. Again, older children keep an eye, and will let me know everything is there to use.



A funky welcome; we did this for our opening.
Congo class decorated CDs and wrote a greeting in
a foreign language. Notice how our Shed is great
for hanging things!



So, you see, we kind of, have a formula, for our next theme, the following half-term.

- Something funky to welcome children in (we hung baubles from the ceiling)
- Jazzy bunting (we used tinsel, as it was Advent)
- Something collaborative to join in with (like making the rainbow from hands)
- A prayer tree (this time it was a Christmas tree), to add something personal
- Something touchy-feely, like the pebbles (this time it was a Posada)
- A bible story, to find out more
- Something curious (this time, it was all about wreaths)
- Some bright and interesting pictures on the walls

We're also an **Eco-School** so, despite all the laminating, we are keeping all our resources, to use again in a couple of year's time.





Okay, all of this sounds perfect, but ... how are we keeping it fresh and engaging, and encouraging footfall?

- It's not been easy, especially when covid struck, just as we were ready to open our Advent-themed Shed. At that point, we had my class in for a fortnight, then gave the Shed Friday off, with a new class coming in Monday, as we were working in bubbles
- I am guilty of giving the Shed Monitors Haribo packets at the end of each half-term
- We have had chats about 'how we behave' in the Shed. I have explained that it's more like the playground than a class, but that the Monitors should not be cleaning up after children. This has generally worked well, as some 'quiet' children have found being Monitors difficult, especially when 'monitoring' older children.
- I have also asked the help of the amazing Diane (Etkins), who has helped me with ideas and a few resources at the planning stage. It helps to be a little ahead of yourself in this respect.



And for the future?

Well, we are now linking our assembly themes (although still want to have major Christian festivals celebrated (eg Christmas and Easter). I would like to hang big decorated Easter eggs from the ceiling!

We also, of course, want the children coming up with ideas. Maybe our children who organise assemblies might want to take on the Shed as well? Who knows? ;)



