

# Resource reviews

- ★★★★★ very highly recommended / absolutely outstanding
- ★★★★☆ highly recommended / extremely good
- ★★★☆☆ recommended / good
- ★★★☆☆ recommended with minor reservations / mediocre
- ★★☆☆☆ recommended with major reservations / weak
- ✗☆☆☆☆ not recommended / extremely weak

## Faiths & Religions of the World

David Gibbons, 2007  
Worth Press  
hardback, 160pp, £25.00  
illustrations: colour photos  
ISBN: 978-1903-025-390  
use: secondary school library – reference

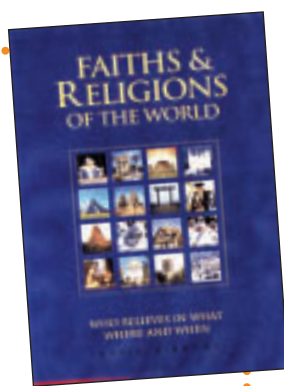


Described in the publisher's flyer as 'offering a graphic panorama of the religions of the world ... including two large, full-colour world maps showing the origin, spread and history of each religion', this book will form a useful addition to any secondary school library. A particular feature of the book is 26 pages of timeline, from 3000 BC to 2007 CE, the most recent 100 years in five year slots.

The text is bold and easy to read, and the illustrations are profuse – with excellent colour photographs on every page. The main religions are treated in traditional form – Hinduism, for example, has paragraphs on 'Sacred Writing', the 'Hindu Pantheon', 'Gods', 'Hindu Wording', 'Caste' and 'Festivals'. Eight pages are devoted to Christianity, two of which offer a useful summary of various nonconformist groups. The Quakers are given a glowing write-up, described as 'having been at the forefront of educational and relief work'. There are additional chapters on 'The Religions of China', 'The Religions of Japan' and 'Alternative and New Religions'.

A distinct plus in this encyclopedic book is the simplicity of the text – easily digestible by thinking students from Year 9 upwards! Expensive at £25, but do persuade your librarian to add it to his/her list of purchases.

**REVIEWER** David Edgington, Retired Head of RE, Watford Grammar School for Boys, Hertfordshire.



## Care for the World

Chris Stafford, 2008  
Kevin Mayhew Ltd  
paperback, 110pp, £16.99  
illustrations: black and white diagrams and illustrations  
ISBN: 978-1-84417-978-7  
use: KS2 collective worship



*Care for the World* is a book of 30 assemblies aimed at KS2. It claims to combine 'facts, faith and fun' whilst promoting 'action and responsibility'. The first of these claims is evident in the majority of the assemblies with a range of strategies used to put across the serious message of the assembly in a lively way. Some of the assemblies do require a lot of preparation and resources to present them as per the assembly plan, but in most cases it would be worth the effort.

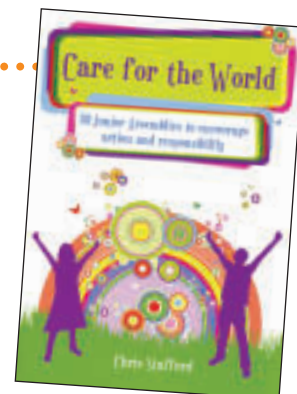
The assemblies are split into three categories: 'Times and Seasons', 'Caring For God's World' and 'Issues'. The last two of these categories fit the book's aims to promote action and responsibility, but the first seems to fit less well. However, with fresh ways of approaching the Christian festivals they are still a worthy addition to the book.

The format of each assembly does vary somewhat, but all the assemblies begin with a suggested biblical text which fits the theme of the assembly. Most of the assemblies are then divided into a main presentation followed by an application section which applies the story to the modern context. This is sometimes followed by ideas for follow-up and usually a prayer.

Songs and relevant websites are suggested for many of the assemblies and there is also an extremely useful resource section at the back of the book.

As a regular planner of collective worship, I am looking forward to using this highly useful book.

**REVIEWER** Andrew Hornsby, Class Teacher, RE Subject Leader and Collective Worship Co-ordinator, Holton-le-Clay Junior School, Lincolnshire.



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## Growing Green: A young person's guide to taking care of the planet

Christina Goodings, 2008  
Lion Hudson  
hardback, 32pp, £6.99  
illustrations: colour  
ISBN: 978-0-7459-6074-6  
use: library, reference, gift



There are so many excellent books about saving the environment that yet another would need to be of a suitably high standard, with a particular focus, and specifically targeted age-appropriate activities, to warrant anyone buying it.

When I opened *Growing Green* my first reaction was that it looked very attractive, but as I started to read I became less enthusiastic. The artwork presents a colourful fictional paradise that is middle class, middle European and, consequently, very White. I don't know of any farm where there is an orchard with cows, chickens and a tractor ploughing there all together! Nor do I know of a family going camping, outside Scouting, that will collect wood to make a fire, collect water in plastic containers from some distance away or use one small oil lantern for light. We don't have a 'rubbish heap' to put our rubbish on; it usually goes in wheelie bins. I won't go on. It's just that this book is oh-so-clearly not based on the real world. Few, if any, British children will relate to the images and/or experiences portrayed.

In this book the author tries to cover too many topics and doesn't do justice to most of them. Although the section on the water cycle is very helpful and attractive, and the growing your own garden section is good, the rest of the book is too wishy-washy and broad. Even the helpful hints at the bottom of the pages, although short and easy to remember, are really more appropriate to older children and adults.

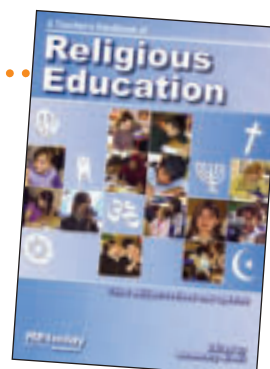
As I said earlier, there are many excellent books about saving the environment. *Growing Green* is not one of them.

**REVIEWER** Moira Kleissner, School Librarian and Supply Teacher,  
Hillside Community Primary School, Ipswich, Suffolk.

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## A Teacher's Handbook of Religious Education

Rosemary Rivett (ed), 2007  
RE Today Services  
paperback, 88pp, £15.00  
illustrations: black and white illustrations/photos  
ISBN 978-1-904024-95-8  
use: anyone with responsibility for delivering RE



This book should be in every setting where RE is taught! It will make the lives of Heads of RE and RE co-ordinators so much easier. Building on the previous excellent editions, this third edition is usefully divided into four sections.

Section one deals with RE subject leadership and is full of charts and mapping diagrams detailing how RE can contribute to, for example, the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda and the primary and secondary strategies. It offers useful frameworks for writing an RE policy and makes practical suggestions for personalised learning, inclusion, etc. There are handy summaries of the role of the subject leader, RE and the law, team building and working with teachers with other specialisms.

The second section, entitled 'Curriculum Issues' offers advice and suggestions around foundation stage, thinking skills, creativity, literacy, ICT, 16-19 provision and other such issues which occupy the minds of RE leaders. It gives appropriate examples which provide easy frameworks for other mapping.

The third section on the six major world religions and non-religious ethical life stances provides brief summaries of key beliefs and facts, as well as suggestions for appropriate work with various age ranges.

The final brief section focuses on resources and provides a rationale for the selection and use of a wide range of resources.

Having this book within easy reach may help raise the profile of RE within the school, improve the quality of the RE provision and, all importantly, increase the enjoyment of the pupils studying the subject

**REVIEWER** Jocelyn Sumner, Partnership Director, University of Exeter  
(formerly Head of RE at Teign School, Kingsteignton, Devon).

# Resource reviews

## Ending the Slave Trade with William Wilberforce of Hull

John Haden and the Pupils of St Nicholas Primary School, Hull, 2007

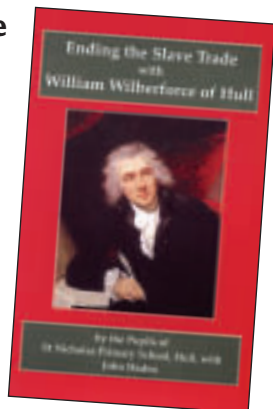
Barry Books

paperback, 80pp, £5.99

illustrations: photographs and drawings

ISBN: 978-1-903172-87-2

use: KS2 history and RE



This series of books delightfully reflects local history and RE. The 'Books with Schools' project encourages pupils to research and then tell the story of the life of a famous local individual. In all the books the strong faith of the women and men featured shines through.

*Ending the Slave Trade with William Wilberforce of Hull* gives us insights into the protagonist's life and mission. There is a lovely mix of colour and black and white photographs, together with pupils' drawings. I really liked the 'African poems' written by pupils on pages 13 and 14, capturing something of the essence of their lives before and after captivity. One such entry (by Carys) for 1780 begins: 'I am scratching this into the side of the ship with the pointed end of my shackle.' Another (by Jodie) reflects: 'We must be getting near the end of our journey by now. I hope that it will be better when we get off the ship. It can't get any worse than this, can it?'

*William Brewster of the Pilgrim Fathers* tells of a man who travelled on The Mayflower in 1620 and became an elder of the church in the New World. I especially appreciated the pen and ink drawings by the pupils; an example being Danielle's portrait of William Brewster as a wise and gentle man with the strength of a prophet and the sense of purpose of a pilgrim; and also the figures left behind on the shore at Immingham by Molly. The timeline and websites at the back of the book are helpful additions.

## William Brewster of the Pilgrim Fathers

John Haden and the Pupils of the Parish Church Primary School, Gainsborough, 2006

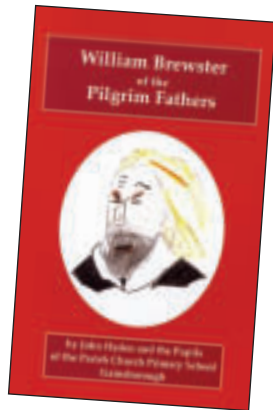
Barry Books

paperback, 80pp, £6.99

illustrations: photographs and drawings

ISBN: 978-1-903172-73-5

use: KS2 history and RE



Wives and children on the shore at Immingham, drawn by Molly, in *William Brewster*

*Mrs John Rolfe of Heacham better known as Pocahontas* is a delight. I particularly enjoyed the drawings of 'Pocahontas in England' by Megan and 'Pocahontas angry with Captain John Smith' by Katherine C. I also appreciated the script written by Year 6 pupils where a child, Matoake, longs for her grandfather to tell again the story of Snow Feather. Readers will discover that the peace Pocahontas strove to bring between the Powhattan and the English lived on after her death. And did you know that Pocahontas became a Christian and at her baptism took the name Rebecca?

## Mrs John Rolfe of Heacham better known as Pocahontas

John Haden and the Pupils of Heacham Junior School, 2006

Barry Books

paperback, 80pp, £5.99

illustrations: photographs and drawings

ISBN: 1-903172-59-4

use: KS2 history and RE



Other titles in this excellent series include *Captain John Smith and the Founding of America* (by John Haden and the Pupils of Willoughby and Partney Schools), *Admiral of New England: Captain John Smith and the American Dream* (by John Haden and the Y7 Students of King Edward VI Grammar School, Louth), *Captain Christopher Newport of Limehouse, Virginia and the East Indies* (by John Haden and the Pupils of the Mayflower and the Holy Family Schools, Tower Hamlets) and *Bartholomew Gosnold of Otley and America* (by John Haden and Y7 Students of Woodbridge School, Suffolk).

**REVIEWER** Lizzie McWhirter, RE Adviser for Coventry Diocese.

## The Lion Book of Christmas Carols to Sing and Play

Philip Tebbs and Victoria Tebbs, 2006

Lion Hudson

paperback, 47pp, £6.99

illustrations: colour

ISBN: 978 07459 6042 5

use: as a Bible story book or as a music book for young pianists, etc.



This book is much more than the title suggests, for as well as including simple arrangements of 15 traditional Christmas songs and carols, it also includes the Christmas story and some very appealing illustrations.

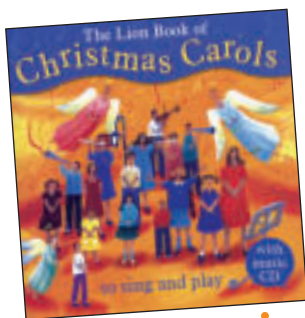
It begins by setting the scene of people waiting for God to act. After this, the story sticks to a reasonably accurate retelling of the biblical story, beginning with the visit of the Angel Gabriel to Mary and concluding with the story of Anna and Simeon. Appropriate Bible references are given on each page. The Magi are referred to as 'travellers' and the title 'three kings' is quite rightly never mentioned. However, the facing illustration is quite clearly of three kings and the carol 'We Three Kings' does follow, perhaps distracting from the accuracy of the text!

The carols themselves have been chosen carefully to fit with the different parts of the story, with the exception of the songs 'Jingle Bells' and 'We Wish You A Merry Christmas'.

*The Lion Book of Christmas Carols to Sing and Play* states that the musical arrangements are suitable for beginner recorder players. The arrangements are fairly simple, but the range of notes in the carols (just over an octave including some sharps and flats) and the fact that it is written in piano score, would be a challenge for most beginner recorder players.

The accompanying CD has a good quality backing track for each carol as well as a version performed by a group of children. Overall, this is a good quality resource.

**REVIEWER** Andrew Hornsby, Class Teacher, RE Subject Leader and Collective Worship Co-ordinator, Holton-le-Clay Junior School, Lincolnshire.



## Boring Bible: Crackers Christmas

Andy Robb, 2005

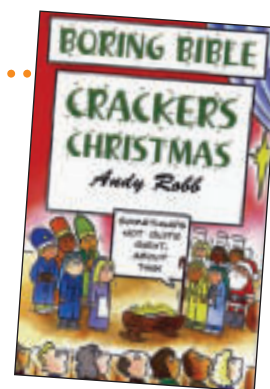
John Hunt Publishing Ltd

paperback, 128pp, £5.99

illustrations: black and white drawings

ISBN: 1-842981-66-8

use: KS2 and KS3



The book *Boring Bible: Crackers Christmas* by Andy Robb begins by putting Christmas into a context which children recognise: presents, Santa, crackers, trees and carols.

The story is set in the context of the times. It gives interesting historical facts, for example, the story of Santa and when Christmas was first celebrated. The 'fascinating facts' boxes are a good way of conveying interesting nuggets of information. Historical scenes, such as the Roman rulers deciding to take a census at the time Jesus was about to be born, helps readers to understand what was happening at the time. Andy Robb also writes about the pagan background behind a lot of our Christmas traditions. This helps children to differentiate between our made up traditions and the story of Christmas – the Birth of Jesus. It certainly answers many questions that children might ask about Christmas.

The use of comic style images is engaging for the reader and breaks up the text into more 'readable' chunks. The use of casual, conversational language brings the story alive and makes it easy to understand. It effectively condenses the Bible story into an easy to read, child-friendly version while still managing to get the story across in a memorable way, and at the same time highlighting the true meaning of Christmas.

This book would appeal to both Christians and non-Christians alike and would be a welcomed addition to any school's book shelf.

**REVIEWER** Angela Hedges, Class Teacher and ICT Subject Leader, Charlton Manor Primary School, London.

### Looking for more reviews?

The *Resource Reviews* section of the ACT website contains a free-to-view, searchable database with more than 300 reviews written *by* and *for* Christian educators from a biblical Christian perspective.

[www.christians-in-education.org.uk](http://www.christians-in-education.org.uk)