



VALUING MONEY

*A 10-UNIT RE PROGRAMME
HELPING CHILDREN UNPACK
THE REAL VALUE OF MONEY*



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Making the most of this book

How is this topic relevant to our pupils?

You can tell what God thinks of money by the type of people he gives most of it to. ANON

Money doesn't really exist. Think about it for a moment. That credit card is just a piece of plastic. Those coins or notes are just pieces of metal or paper, collectively assigned a 'value' that measures its actual worth to us at any given place and time. The bar of chocolate we buy might cost us 65p at the shop around the corner, because the shopkeeper assumes she can get us to pay that sum. If we take the trouble to drive to the out-of-town supermarket, the price might be lower (although we'll probably be spending money on other things too while we're there).

Furthermore, we have all agreed (in the United Kingdom, at least) to pay for our chocolate bars in pounds and pence. In the Republic of Ireland we would pay for them in euros and cents, and, in the USA, we'd use dollars and cents. Let's explore the 'value' of that chocolate bar further. The 65 pence that we spend may be a small proportion of our personal income. If we are in paid employment, our income was paid to us as a measurement of what our employer (or customer) thought our labour was worth. They could have paid us in sea shells or kisses, but that would be awkward and unhygienic—and it might turn some people into millionaires quite quickly! So money is just a shared symbol for use in transactions, a kind of social contract that works only by mutual agreement. We could replace our 'currency' with community credits or bartered goods or services, but someone, somewhere, still has to decide how we measure and compare the 'worth' or 'value' of different goods and services, and everyone else has to agree with that decision.

Once we start using money for transactions, it can also become a measure of our personal status, influence and prestige, or our lack of them. Money can buy property, comfort and security, including the assurance of food on the table tomorrow and next week. It can also buy freedom from want, hardship and the need to rely on others. (One newspaper supplement on personal finance was headed 'Take control of your life'.) Equally, money can be used generously to feed the hungry and support the weak or to endow the creation of artworks and music that lift the soul and spirit. So, we have to learn to be responsible with it.

Every child understands that money is a useful tool for getting us the things we want, but it takes time to understand that there's more to personal finance than simply getting cash from a hole in the wall and spending it. In the same way that maintaining a healthy body requires an understanding of nutrition, the maintenance of healthy personal finance requires a grasp of cash flow, noting how money moves into a bank account and out again. Children need to understand that money doesn't just 'happen': somebody, somewhere, has to earn it in some way before we can spend it, or we fall into debt—which is why having a regular part-time job is an excellent way for a child to learn financial independence from a young age. We also have to understand the difference between 'wants' and 'needs': we cannot (and should not) ever expect to be able to buy everything we desire, despite the best efforts of the advertisers.

Why teach about money in Religious Education?

There are some excellent initiatives encouraging primary schools to take money education seriously, but few explore the moral or spiritual dimensions. Religious Education can play a powerful role in connecting and extending a school's offering of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education, because RE is about examining and extending a child's understanding of values. So, any RE topic exploring 'the difference that faith makes to life' should involve some discussion of the way money is understood and used. Interestingly, according to the Christian Bible, Jesus Christ had a great deal more to say about avarice (lust for money) than he ever did about sexual issues, likening it to the worship of other gods (Matthew 6:19–21, 24).

Valuing Money uses Religious Education to connect the SMSC part of the broader primary school curriculum with Numeracy, supporting the following generic RE topics. (Thanks to Lisa Fenton of Blackburn Diocese for this list.)

Rules for life

- What are rules?
- Why do we have rules?
- Who makes the rules?
- Is there a difference between rules and laws?
- What would happen if there were no rules?

Change the world

- What matters most to me?
- If you could change the world, what would you change? Why?
- Can I make a difference? How can I make a difference?
- How could you change the world?

What matters most?

- How do you decide what matters most?
- Who helps you decide what matters most?
- What are the key elements of friendship?
- What does God tell us matters most?

Harvest

- Why do we celebrate harvest festival?
- Where does our food come from?
- Which foods do you enjoy the most?
- How can we help those who do not have a good harvest?
- Why should we help those who do not have a good harvest?

People of faith

- What is faith?
- What does it mean for a person to have faith?
- What does it mean to be a person of faith?
- What motivates people of faith?
- How does having faith affect people's lives?

Wisdom

- What is a proverb?
- What is the message of the proverb we are studying today?
- Is this proverb still relevant today?
- What is wisdom? Who gives us wisdom?
- Who is wise?

Of course, RE is taught across the country through a variety of locally determined syllabuses, but we hope that the materials provided here are adaptable enough to suit the needs of your own school.

Applying the values

Values matter and, if we don't discuss them with children when discussing money, then the children lose out. Our values shape our attitudes and choices, whether we are saving, spending or giving money away. But isn't maths morally neutral? Not if we start applying the mathematics of money to everyday life, because immediately we face moral and spiritual questions. Children understand this very quickly as soon as they start acquiring pocket money.

- How do I get more pocket money? (Is it just about getting older? Do I need to earn it? Is pocket money a reward for being good? Can I supplement it by doing odd jobs or a paper round, or will that mean the pocket money stops? Can I sell unwanted toys or games?)
- How do I spend my pocket money? (Is money just there to make my life as pleasant and comfortable as possible? Can I spend it on absolutely anything I want? Is it worth saving up for something special? Can I make money from saving?)
- Why do others get more (or less) pocket money than I do? (Is that fair? What does fairness mean, anyway? Is there a right amount of pocket money for all children or should we just accept that each family does things its own way?)
- Should I borrow money from my friends or lend it to others? (Why do it? What could go right—or wrong?)

And here's a bonus question: why is stealing from Mum's purse wrong?

Of course, these child-sized questions all naturally extend into their adult equivalents, which is why financial education is so important. Financial education also shows up the values we're using and teaching. For example, most money 'problems' in maths schemes involve spending cash, but very few involve giving it away. Most charitable efforts in school involve making one-off contributions to a cause, but any charity will tell you that they much prefer being given regular tax-efficient payments over a given term. (Which do we prefer doing, and why?) Many fundraising efforts, such

as the National Lottery, offer prizes in raffles or sweepstakes, promising the chance of winning a substantial prize, but few ask individuals simply to make a generous donation for a worthy cause.

Discussion of attitudes and values needs to go much deeper than encouraging pupils to 'make an informed choice'. Otherwise, we shouldn't be surprised if our children interpret that phrase to mean, 'You can do whatever you like if you think about it first.' The history of faith and belief includes discussions of work ethics, pride, avarice, fraud, speculation and greed, questions about the long-term consequences of selfishness and materialism, and demands for the rich to take responsibility for the care of the poor. Our children need tools like these to question the assumptions of our money culture, to navigate it safely in future and, especially, to wonder more about what it means to be thankful and generous.

How should we use this book?

Each unit in this book includes a story, RE material, cross-curricular content related to Literacy, Numeracy and other subject areas, and a script for circle time/classroom assembly. There is also an appendix of further ideas for giving an ethical dimension to Numeracy investigations and problems relating to money.

The stories in this book are listed below, with an indication of the RE topics for which they are suitable. All of them are suitable for work relating to Sacred texts/The Christian Bible/What Christians believe.

- Unit 1: The million-dollar note
What matters most / Wisdom / People of faith / Harvest
- Unit 2: Isaac Newton, currency detective
Rules for life / What matters most? / Wisdom
- Unit 3: The Emperor of the Earth Dragon
Harvest / Change the world / People of faith / What matters most? / Wisdom
- Unit 4: A penny for your thoughts
Rules for life / Change the world / People of faith / What matters most?
- Unit 5: It's not fair!
Rules for life / Harvest / Change the world / People of faith / What matters most?
- Unit 6: So why do you want this job?
Rules for life / Change the world / What matters most? / Wisdom
- Unit 7: Tulips from Amsterdam
Rules for life / Change the world / What matters most? / Wisdom
- Unit 8: Wings on his feet
Change the world / People of faith / What matters most?
- Unit 9: Bittersweet
Rules for life / Harvest / Change the world / People of faith / What matters most? / Wisdom
- Unit 10: Visiting time
Rules for life / Harvest / Change the world / What matters most?

Using the Christian Bible in primary school

The extracts in this resource are taken from the Contemporary English Version of the Bible. Biblical texts provide excellent stimulus for discussion and response, but they need to be carefully chosen and rendered in appropriate child-friendly language. There is a wealth of good translations and paraphrased versions available on the market, including *The Barnabas Schools Bible* (Barnabas for Schools, 2012) and the Children's International Version (UK). Downloads of Bible texts in a range of modern translations can also be found at www.biblegateway.com. For further ideas about handling Bible stories in school, see our website: www.barnabasinschools.org.uk.

Using drama and storytelling in RE

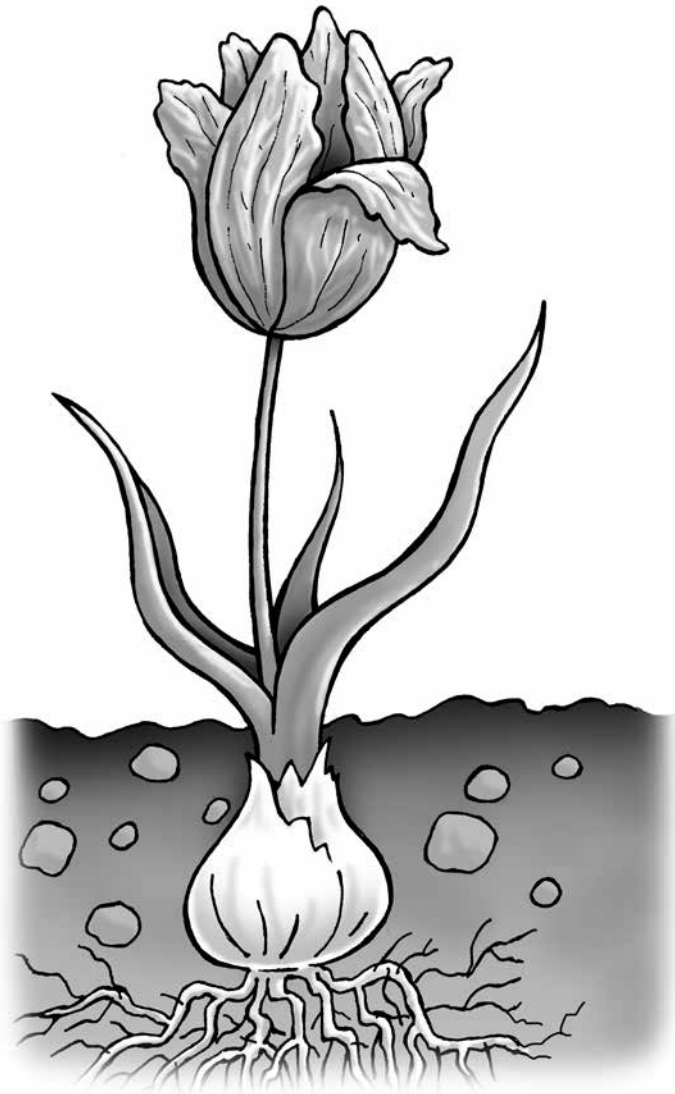
Acting and role play are an important part of many of the activities included in this book because they are inclusive, allowing pupils of all abilities to participate in the stories and experience them through the imagination. This approach allows pupils to grasp the human dilemmas in the stories for themselves and then reflect on whether or not they would respond in the same way as the characters did. Teaching RE like this isn't easier, but it can be a lot more fun, provided that pupils are given clear expectations about behaviour and respecting others in discussion. Schools workers and teachers have often found that techniques like these are highly successful at engaging pupils who have apparently 'switched off' from RE.

A good dramatised RE session will include warm-up games to introduce key vocabulary and ideas, clear organisation of pupil groups and opportunities for discussion. The use of 'talking partners' always speeds up preparations for speaking and listening. Discussion also gets more interesting when pupils are encouraged to generate questions about the story instead of simply answering questions set by the teacher. Written responses can be included, but a higher quality of responses is preferable to a greater quantity. Sometimes, allowing pupils to illustrate their ideas quickly as cartoons or diagrams will generate richer responses, provided that the efforts are clearly labelled and explained. If your classroom has space for drama and deskwork, experiment by alternating short drama sessions with fast written responses, to get thoughts down on paper immediately.

Stories and lesson material

Unit 7

Speculation and investment





Background for teachers

There's money in flowers. 'Tulipomania' was the name given to a wave of financial speculation in the Netherlands during the 1630s, as millions of florins were invested in the collection and production of rare tulip bulbs. Many people were trying to make money from buying bulbs that were bound to increase in value, to be sold on at a profit... or so they thought. Of course, it all went wrong, and some rich speculators were left with very expensive flowerbeds that looked good but weren't worth very much. Some historians and economists now wonder if the story has been exaggerated, but, when other modern investment scandals (such as 'Bitcoins') are discussed, Tulipomania is often mentioned too.

Pupils might find the following story funny, but it's surprising how our sense of 'value' can lead us into parting with large sums of money for items that may not, in themselves, be worth very much. Children are particularly prone to the natural urge to build up collections of favourite things (trading cards, model figures, stickers and so on), especially if everyone else in the playground is seen to be doing it. (See the assembly script 'Don't be fooled!' on page 98.) Many children and adults get sucked into the notion that their collectables will be worth something some day. They probably won't—but the sellers may be!



Story: Tulips from Amsterdam

The Amsterdam courtroom was packed and the judge impatient. 'Send the prisoner in!' he commanded.

A guard strode out, returning shortly with his hand on the shoulder of a nervous man wearing handcuffs. The prisoner looked rather frightened. All these angry people were staring at him. What was he doing here? It was all an accident. He had just made a silly mistake. Anyone could have done it. Why had they locked him up in the town jail? Now he was standing in the dock to hear the charges. His name and occupation were read out to the court by a lawyer—'Albert Tripp, English sailor'—and then the judge spoke.

'The charge is this—that you willingly stole and destroyed a valuable item belonging to Mr Geert Langsgaard, a merchant in our town. At his counting-house, you took this valuable item from his desk, placed it in your pocket and then later destroyed it.'

Albert's face was pale. 'Umm... can I explain?'

'Do you plead guilty or not guilty?'

'I thought it was an onion.'

'I repeat, do you plead guilty or not guilty?'

'It was a mistake! I didn't know!'

The judge sighed. 'That is not the point. But if you plead guilty, any explanation you then give might lead to a lighter sentence, if we are sympathetic. So how do you plead?'

A long pause. 'Guilty. But I'm sorry!'

The judge let out another long breath. 'Well, then. Tell your story.'

After promising to tell only the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth (so help him God), the sailor told his tale.

'I was at the counting-house because Mr Langsgaard had said he wanted to know, as soon as possible, that our ship had arrived. So, when we docked, I was sent to tell him we were here and ready to unload. He was really pleased: he shook my hand and offered to buy me some breakfast. One of his servants brought me some nice pickled herring to eat and left me in the office. Now I've had pickled herring before—it's how you eat fish in Amsterdam—but there wasn't any chopped onion to go with it. You've got to have chopped onion with your herring. I looked around and there was an onion sitting on a desk. So I took it.'

There was a sigh around the courtroom.

'I went back to the docks, bought a bread roll, sat down on a bench, took out my knife and had my breakfast. I cut up the herring, sliced up the onion and put them in the roll. And I ate them. That's all I did!'

People groaned. The judge raised his hand. 'You thought Mr Langsgaard's tulip bulb was an onion?'

'Yes.'

The judge winced. 'How did it taste?'

'Not good, but I was hungry.' There was another groan around the courtroom.

'Mister Tripp, did you know that some tulip bulbs in this country are being sold for a great deal of money?'

'I do now, my Lord.'

'But do you know how much this one cost? It was a Semper Augustus, costing 3000 florins. In case you do not understand our Dutch currency, let me make this clear. Your breakfast cost Mr Langsgaard enough money to pay for a complete royal banquet, or it would feed your English ship's crew for a whole year. Do you understand now? That bulb was an investment. Unless you can pay him back, I must sentence you to six months in our town jail. Do you have anything to say?'

'Er... no. I'm only a sailor. I haven't got that sort of money. Why did he leave it just lying around like that? Can't I pay him back bit by bit?'

The judge looked at Mr Langsgaard, who furiously shook his head, then turned back.

'No. I sentence you to six months in jail. Do you have anything else to say?'

'Yes. I hope the breakfasts in jail taste better than that bulb!'

Explain that this court case really happened in the Netherlands, 300 years ago. For a time, some rare tulip bulbs became more expensive than jewellery, simply because they were rare. But bulbs can be used to make more bulbs (you can't do that with jewellery), which means that, at some point, your rare bulbs stop being rare and then they lose their value. People can still be fooled by thoughts of making a lot of money very quickly and it can all go wrong.

Religious Education

Age 5–7: The love of money

Ask, 'Who here would like to be rich? If you could have a lot of money, what would you do with it?' Some people have thought that the Christian Bible says, 'Money is the root of all evil', but that's not true. In 1 Timothy 6:10, the apostle Paul writes, 'The love of money causes all kinds of trouble. Some people want money so much that they have given up their faith and caused themselves a lot of pain.'

On the other hand, the author Mark Twain said, 'Lack of money is the root of all evil.'

What do your pupils think is the most dangerous thing in the world—wanting money or not having enough money? Discuss these two ideas. Is there any way they could both be dangerous?

Set the task of drawing somebody who has just found a £20 note lying on the ground and, in thought bubbles, showing what this person might be thinking. If they were a Christian who took Paul's words seriously, what might they do with the money? What would your class do?

Age 7–11: Parables about 'true treasure'

Share these parables of Jesus with the class. He said that the kingdom of God is like a man who discovered treasure in a neighbour's field and decided that the only legal way of getting his hands on it was by selling everything he had to buy the field. He also said that it was like a jewellery expert who sacrificed all his other jewels to acquire the greatest one of all.

Bible link: Matthew 13:44–46

The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when someone finds a treasure hidden in a field and buries it again. A person like that is happy and goes and sells everything in order to buy that field.

The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when a shop owner is looking for fine pearls. After finding a very valuable one, the owner goes and sells everything in order to buy that pearl.

What do your pupils think is the key message of these parables? (There is a cost to being part of God's kingdom. Sometimes you have to be ready to 'sacrifice', to lose things that aren't so important, to get your hands on the things that are really important.)

Share the following words, which Jesus spoke about 'treasure'.

Bible link: Luke 12:33–34; Matthew 6:19–21

Sell what you have and give the money to the poor. Make yourselves moneybags that never wear out. Make sure your treasure is safe in heaven, where thieves cannot steal it and moths cannot destroy it. Your heart will always be where your treasure is.

Don't store up treasures on earth! Moths and rust can destroy them, and thieves can break in and steal them. Instead, store up your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy them, and thieves cannot break in and steal them. Your heart will always be where your treasure is.

Ask, 'What do we think are the key life messages here? What are your own life ambitions? What would you want your life to be like when you are 16, 18, 25, 40, 50 or 60?'

Set the task of constructing a personal illustrated timeline for the future, including the fulfilment of three important ambitions.

Discuss

- Do you think a Christian who took Jesus' words seriously would have these same ambitions? Why? Why not?
- What might a Christian's 'treasure' be?

Literacy

What's your treasure? Children will be familiar with the idea of school crazes where suddenly everybody has to have the latest gadget, fashion item or set of collectables. Marketing experts know how to play on this desire, which is why so much advertising shows other people apparently enjoying a product. It's saying, 'If you buy this, it will make your life so much better—look at these people enjoying it!' Deconstructing these messages helps children to see what is really going on.

Age 5–7: Branded packaging

'Brand recognition' of products began in the Victorian age as suppliers of goods realised that purchasers wanted to be able to trust that the thing they were buying was of a consistently good quality. Packaging rapidly became stylised as producers established their products in the minds of the public with clear brand names, colours, fonts, logos, images and catchphrases.

Prepare by obtaining a large cereal packet that's been designed to appeal to children. Introduce the lesson by mentioning how advertisers try to give packaging 'pester-power', using all sorts of clever tricks to make children ask their parents to buy something in the supermarket. Then pass the packet around the class (starting with the less able pupils), asking each child to notice something different about the packaging, while you scribe their responses on display.

Note the different sizes of lettering, which draw attention to certain features first. Then discuss which features were especially designed to appeal to children. (You could also open out a box, photocopy all the printed sides at a reduced size, then ask pupils to study it and annotate the key features.)

Set the challenge of creating the front of a new box of horrible cereal that the makers are desperate to sell to children. ('Yummy Bunny Droppings?')

Extension

Show examples of how one product has been packaged differently over the decades. What changes do the pupils notice?

Age 7–11: TV adverts—Lights, camera, action

Prepare up to three recordings of age-appropriate broadcast commercials designed to appeal to children, especially ones featuring child actors.

Explain that, unlike other types of TV programming, adverts are designed to sell things to people. Everything we see or hear happening in a commercial is there to make us buy something. If we see someone who looks or sounds like us, enjoying a product, that's because the makers want us to identify with that experience.

Show at least one of the adverts twice. On the second showing, assign groups of pupils the task of discussing and noting down some of the following features:

- The key features of the product that the makers want you to remember
- The key expressions and responses of the child actors
- Words, phrases, images, text, music and dramatic events used to reinforce their message
- Pupils' own feelings about the advert. On a scale of 1–10, how strongly do they think the advert made them want to buy the product? Why did it have that impact?

Groups can feed back their responses for general class discussion. Individuals should then write a report about the advert, describing its key messages and how they were reinforced.

Extension

Set the task of scripting an advert, using the same techniques, to try to either sell an unlikely spoof product or persuade people to give money regularly to a real charity.

Drama

Age 7–11: 'Halt! Hand over your tulips!'

On YouTube, find and show the classic 1970s Monty Python sketch 'Dennis Moore', in which a highwayman holds up a stagecoach to demand that the passengers hand over their cargo of lupin flowers, then redistributes them to the baffled local poor.

Warm up by practising facial expressions and gestures for terror, outrage, greed and so on.

Set groups of pupils the challenge of recreating the dialogue for the scene—only this time the stagecoach is carrying a cargo of 'precious' tulip bulbs. Every member of each team has to contribute something to the hammed-up dialogue, which should last about a minute. ('No! Not my precious bulbs!' 'You'll never get away with this!') If there is time, add gestures and simple movements.

Circle Time

Age 5–11: Love, the ultimate treasure?

This session explores the importance of love in our growth as people.

Preparation

You will need a picture of a baby.

Introduction

Display your picture of a baby. Ask, 'Who here has had a baby in the house? What's it like? How does having a baby change the way you have to live?' Pupils can share their experiences.

Development

Say, 'We've been thinking about treasure. Here's somebody's little treasure!' (Show picture.)

Explain that babies are born with all sorts of needs. Ask pupils to discuss, in pairs, the question, 'What does a baby need to be happy and comfortable?' Feed back, listing the obvious issues like warmth and milk for nutrition, but also the crucial need for affection from others: a baby needs to know that it is loved. Ask, 'How would a baby know this?' Take answers and list them on the board, adding the following if they are not mentioned: kisses and cuddles, gazing into eyes, talking and stroking. Explain that this is how babies learn to trust others: they learn that they are valued, by having all their needs met, time and time again.

When we're born, we're all at the centre of our own little world. In a way, you could say we are all born selfish—but then we start growing up and we realise that other people have needs as well. They need to be loved, too. The sooner we realise this, the more grown-up we are. Maturity isn't about simply getting older in years; it's about learning how to love others, and it takes a lifetime to get right.

In the Christian Bible, Paul writes this:

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails!

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4–8

Could this kind of love be a 'treasure'?

∞ Prayer ∞

Father God, help me to learn how to love others. Help me to seek the greatest treasure of all. Amen

• Thought for today •

What's your treasure?