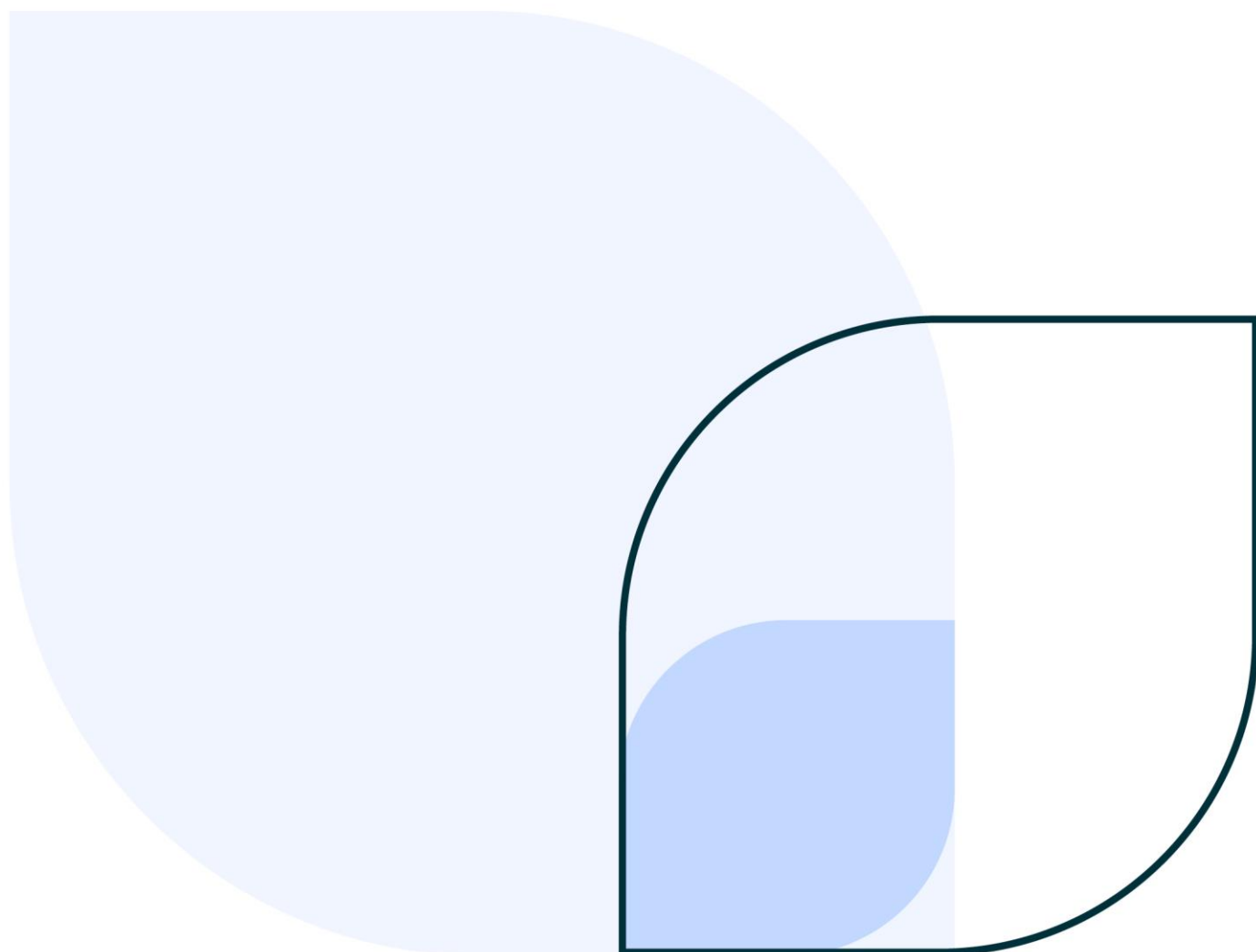


Collective Worship

Secondary resources:

Retelling our Story: Mary Prince.





## Key Concept / Message

### Black History Month 2024: Reclaiming Narratives

Black History Month (BHM) is celebrated in October in the UK, with a focus on recognising and honouring the contributions, resilience, and achievements of Black communities. It began in 1987 in the UK, inspired by the American observance, but tailored to reflect the specific stories of Black British people. This year's theme, "Reclaiming Narratives," encourages us to share our own stories, ensuring that our voices are heard authentically and respectfully.

As Christians, engaging with BHM aligns with biblical teachings of justice, truth, and love. Proverbs 31:8-9 calls us to "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute." By actively participating in BHM, we fulfil this command, amplifying the voices that have been historically silenced and celebrating God's diverse creation. Recognising the struggles and contributions of Black individuals in our communities also reflects the Christian call to love our neighbours (Mark 12:31) and to honour the dignity and worth of every person, as each is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). BHM is not just a remembrance but a call to action—to learn, reflect, and work towards a more inclusive and just society.

In this act of worship, we'll be exploring the story of about Mary Prince, an author and activist. Mary Prince was a British abolitionist and the first Black woman to publish an autobiography in the United Kingdom. Born into slavery in Bermuda in 1788, she endured harsh treatment and forced labour on various plantations. After escaping to England in 1828, she became an advocate for the abolition of slavery, sharing her harrowing experiences in her book, *The History of Mary Prince*, published in 1831. Her powerful narrative highlighted the brutality of slavery and helped gain public support for the abolitionist movement in Britain.

As Christians, engaging with stories like Mary Prince during BHM aligns with the call to love our neighbour (Mark 12:31) and to stand against injustice, just as Esther did. Proverbs 31:8-9 encourages us to "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves." Prince resilience and her refusal to be silenced serve as a powerful example of reclaiming his narrative and using her voice to inspire positive change.

This act of worship invites us to reflect on how we can show kindness, challenge prejudice, and stand in solidarity with those who face injustice. Just as Mary Prince turned a moment of personal challenge into an opportunity to advocate for change, we too can use our voices and actions to create a more loving and inclusive community.



## Gathering

### **Slide 2: Title Slide – Gathering and Prayer**

Begin with your usual greeting to gather everyone together. You may like to start with an opening prayer, such as this one:

Heavenly Father,

We gather today to remember the story of Mary Prince, a woman who used her voice to speak against injustice. We thank You for her courage and for the lessons we will learn from her life.

Help us to reflect on our actions and advocate for truth and justice, even when it is difficult.

Guide us to be compassionate, to listen, and to be agents of change in our communities.

In Your name, we pray.

Amen.

### **Slides 3, 4 & 5: Title slide: Esther (Esther 7:1-7) Bible Passage**

Read Esther 7:1-7 aloud. Explain the story's context – Esther's bravery in revealing the truth to the King to save her people.

Esther 7 vs 1-7 (CEV)

The king and Haman were dining with Esther when the king asked her again, "Esther, what can I do for you? I will give you anything, even half of my kingdom."

Esther replied, "Your Majesty, if you really care about me, please let me live and let my people live, too. I have heard that we are all going to be killed. If we were only going to be made slaves, I would have kept quiet because that wouldn't be a big enough problem to bother you."

King Xerxes asked, "Who would do such a terrible thing?"

Esther replied, "It's this evil man, Haman!"

Haman was terrified, as the king jumped up in anger and went out to the garden. Haman knew the king had already decided his fate, so he stayed to beg Queen Esther for his life.

Analyse the biblical text (Esther 7:1-7). Discuss how Esther's bravery in confronting the king led to saving her people by reflecting on these 'I wonder' questions below:

I wonder what it took for Esther to speak up in front of the king, knowing the risks involved. How might her courage inspire us when we face difficult situations?

I wonder how Esther's decision to confront the king changed the course of her people's history. What impact can one act of bravery have on an entire community?

### **Slide 6: Title slide: Mary Prince**



Show the picture on the slide and pose the question to the students: “Do you know who this woman is?” Encourage guesses before revealing who she is. If they do recognise her, see how much they know about her.

### **Slide 7: Title slide: Initial introduction to Mary Prince**

Introduce Mary Prince as a key figure in Black history and a symbol of resilience and activism.

After revealing her identity, explain that Mary Prince was an author and activist who used her voice to fight against slavery. Mary Prince’s role as a storyteller and activist was crucial in the abolition movement because her autobiography, *The History of Mary Prince*, provided a powerful, firsthand account of the brutal realities of slavery. Published in 1831, it was the first narrative by a Black woman to be published in Britain, exposing the inhumane conditions of enslaved people in the British colonies. Mary’s vivid storytelling challenged the dehumanising narratives of slavery, giving a voice to the voiceless and inspiring empathy and action among readers, which significantly fuelled the abolitionist cause.

### **Slide 8 - 11: Title slide: Key Information about Mary Prince**

Discuss Mary Prince’s early life in Bermuda and how she was taken from her family and enslaved.

*Mary Prince was born into slavery in Bermuda in 1788. From a young age, she experienced the harsh realities of enslavement. At the age of 12, she was separated from her family and sold to a series of cruel slave owners. Mary endured severe physical and emotional abuse, working long hours in brutal conditions, including washing salt, which was painful and harmful to her skin. Despite these hardships, her resilience and courage later empowered her to share her story, highlighting the brutality of slavery and the deep personal impact of being torn from her family.*

Discussion: Ask students to reflect on how Mary Prince’s early experiences shaped her future activism by reflecting on these ‘I wonder’ questions below:

I wonder how Mary Prince’s early experiences of hardship and separation influenced her decision to speak out against slavery. How do you think her past shaped her courage?

I wonder how understanding Mary Prince’s early life challenges can help us better appreciate her role as an activist. What does her story teach us about the power of personal experience in driving change?

I wonder how we might respond if we were in a situation where our voices were silenced. What would it take to find the courage to speak out, like Mary Prince did?



### **Slide 12: Title slide: Read African Proverb**

Read African proverb.

Explain to the children this proverb reinforces the idea that our stories are powerful and if we do not tell our own stories somebody else may do, and not do out story justice.

Black History Month is about retelling our story of love, life, light and courage to inspire today.

### **Slide 13: Title slide: Connecting Mary Prince and Esther story**

Use Esther and Mary Prince as examples of how stories can inspire action and bring about freedom.

Ask students how telling one's story, like Esther and Mary Prince, can lead to significant change.

Encourage them to think of modern examples where speaking out has made a difference.

Discussion: How does Prince's legacy resonate with contemporary struggles for freedom and equality?

### **Slide 14: Title slide: Prayer**

Invite the children to join with you in prayer:

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for the life of women like Mary Prince.

Help us to be courageous like Mary and Esther. To stand up for what is right.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord

Amen

## **Spiritual Development: Practical Ways to Explore Faith and Develop Spiritually**

### **1. Celebrating Differences Booklet**

#### **"Our Unique Stars"**

- **Description:** Each student decorates a star template with drawings, stickers, and words that represent what makes them special. Combine the stars into a constellation display on a bulletin board, celebrating the uniqueness of each student.



- **Extension:** Create a "Star of the Week" where one student shares their star with the class and explains what makes them proud.

## 2. Create an Inclusive Community Tree

### "Kindness Leaves"

- **Description:** Students create colourful leaves with messages or drawings about acts of kindness they've performed or witnessed. Add these leaves to the tree display. Each leaf can include a small drawing or a short sentence about the kindness shown.
- **Extension:** At the end of each month, have a "Kindness Harvest" where students reflect on the most meaningful acts of kindness added to the tree.

## Activities to Develop Practices and Habits

### 1. Daily Gratitude and Reflection Journal

#### Activity: "Kindness Cards"

- **Description:** Instead of writing in journals, students create and exchange "Kindness Cards" each day. On each card, they write or draw something they're grateful for or a kind action they observed. Students can decorate their cards and share them with a classmate.
- **Extension:** Set up a "Kindness Wall" where students can pin their cards throughout the week.

### 2. Weekly Inclusion Reflections

#### Activity: "Our Kindness Gallery"

- **Description:** Create a gallery in the classroom where students display drawings or written reflections about their acts of kindness from the week. Have a "gallery walk" where students can see and discuss their peers' contributions.
- **Extension:** Invite students to vote on their favourite act of kindness from the week, and celebrate the "Kindness Champion" with a small certificate or special mention.

## Additional Activities

### 3. Storytelling Circle

#### Activity: "Hero Stories"



- **Description:** Students take turns sharing short stories about times when they or someone they know acted bravely or kindly, similar to Esther’s bravery or Mary Prince’s courage. Encourage them to draw or act out their stories.
- **Extension:** Record these stories and create a class book of "Hero Stories" that can be read and shared with other classes.

#### 4. Kindness Role-Play

##### Activity: "Kindness Superheroes"

- **Description:** Set up role-playing scenarios where students practice responding to various situations with kindness and bravery. They can dress up as “kindness superheroes” and act out different scenarios, like helping a friend or standing up for someone.
- **Extension:** Create a "Kindness Superhero Hall of Fame" where students’ role-play achievements are celebrated.

#### 5. Global Kindness Map

##### Activity: "World Kindness Journey"

- **Description:** Create a large map of the world in the classroom and pin different countries where students can learn about acts of kindness or bravery from various cultures. Students can add flags or symbols representing kindness from those countries.
- **Extension:** Encourage students to share stories or facts about kindness from their own cultures or backgrounds.

### Conversations Connecting Communities

#### Personal Reflection:

- How can small acts of kindness make a difference in our school or community?
- Why is it important to act even when problems seem too big to solve alone?
- How can you use your voice to support others?
- What values do you hold that connect with the idea of doing good in the world?

#### Community and Society:



- How can we encourage others to join us in doing small acts of kindness to create a more inclusive society?
- In what ways can communities come together and show support for each other?
- How can we ensure that our good actions inspire others to do the same?

### **Global Perspective:**

- How do you think many people doing small acts of kindness can help address big issues like racism?
- How can learning about different cultures help us be kinder to each other?
- How can young people lead the way in creating a kinder world?
- What kind of world do you want for the future, and what small actions can you take today to help make that world real?

### Collective Worship – Our approach

#### Invitational

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

#### Inclusive

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like: 'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?' 'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ... Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.





## Inspiring

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?