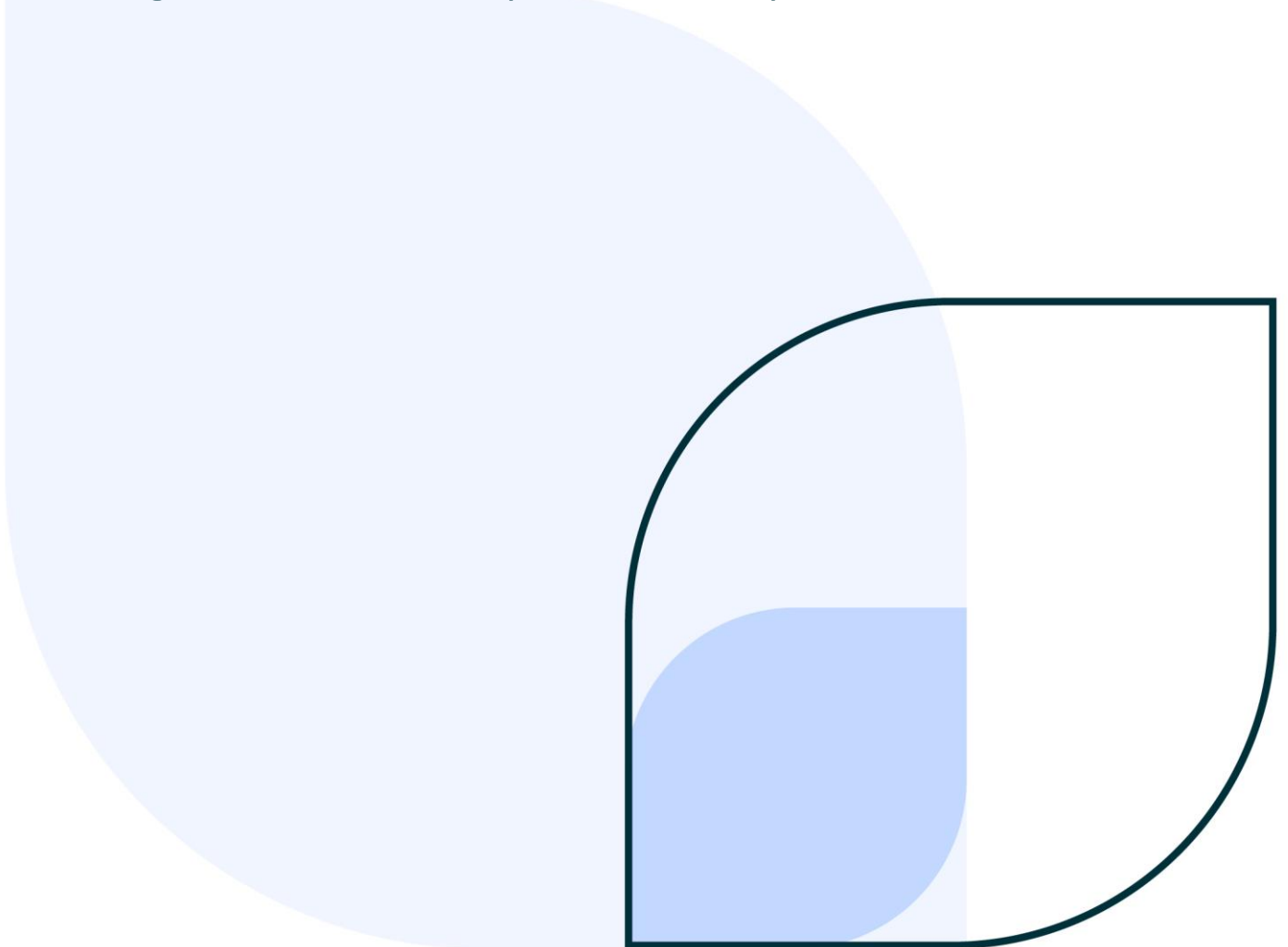


# Collective Worship

## Primary resources:

Retelling Our Stories - Mary Prince's Story.





## Key Concept / Message

Black History Month (BHM) is celebrated in the UK in October and in the United States in February, each with unique origins and significance. In the UK, BHM was first celebrated in 1987, inspired by the American observance but tailored to reflect the specific history and contributions of Black people in Britain. BHM serves as a crucial time to honour the achievements, culture, and stories of Black communities while educating others on the rich history often missing from mainstream narratives. This year's theme, "Reclaiming Narratives," highlights the importance of taking control of our stories, ensuring they are told authentically and with respect.

One significant figure whose story exemplifies this theme is Mary Prince, a British abolitionist and the first Black woman to publish an autobiography recounting her experiences of enslavement. Her book, *The History of Mary Prince*, published in 1831, provided a rare and powerful firsthand account of the brutal realities of slavery in the British colonies. Mary's narrative was an act of courage, reclaiming her story and shining a light on the inhumane conditions of enslavement. Her testimony played a crucial role in influencing the abolitionist movement, challenging the false narratives that dehumanised people of African descent. (You can learn more about Mary Prince here: [The Story of Mary Prince](#))

Mary Prince's story resonates with the biblical story of Esther where Esther bravely speaks out against Haman's plot to destroy her people (Esther 7:1-7). Esther, like Mary Prince, used her voice at great personal risk to advocate for justice and protection of her community. In both stories, we see the power of speaking up and reclaiming narratives that had been overshadowed by oppression and injustice. Esther's courage to confront the king and reveal the truth about her identity and Haman's plot mirrors Mary Prince's bold decision to share her painful experiences of enslavement, ultimately contributing to the fight against injustice.

For Christians, engaging with BHM and stories like Mary Prince's 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." Mary's story exemplifies this call, as she used her voice to advocate for those who could not. Similarly, Esther's courageous actions reflect our call to stand up for truth, even in the face of great adversity. Recognising the struggles and contributions of Black individuals in our communities 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).

Black History Month is not just a remembrance but a call to action—to learn, reflect, and work towards a more inclusive and just society. By reclaiming narratives, we help create a world where all voices are heard, valued, and celebrated, just as Mary Prince and Esther did through their powerful testimonies. Let us be inspired by their courage and commitment to justice, using our voices to advocate for truth and love in our communities today.



## **Slide 2: Gathering**

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

Dear God,

Thank you for the stories of brave people like Mary Prince, who teach us about standing up for what is right.

Help us to be kind, brave, and to use our voices to help others, just as Mary did.

Thank you for always being with us, guiding us to make good choices.

Amen

## **Slide 3: Bible Passage**

Introduce the Bible story for the children

### **Queen Esther Saves Her People (Esther 7 vs 1-7)**

One day, Queen Esther invited King Xerxes and Haman, a powerful man in the king's court, to a special dinner. During the meal, the king asked Queen Esther, "What would you like, Esther? I will give you anything, even half of my kingdom!"

Queen Esther took a deep breath and said, "Your Majesty, if you are pleased with me, please save my life and the lives of my people. We are in danger, and someone wants to hurt us."

The king was very surprised and asked, "Who would do such a terrible thing?"

Esther pointed to Haman and said, "It is him—our enemy!"

Haman was scared. The king was so angry that he stood up and went outside to think about what to do. Haman knew he was in big trouble and begged Queen Esther to save him.

## **Slide 4: Engagement**

Show the picture on the slide and ask the students if they recognise the person (Mary Prince).

Encourage guesses before revealing who she is.

If they do recognise her, see how much they know about her.



### **Slide 5: Introduce Mary Prince**

Introduce Mary Prince as a significant historical figure and share/reflect on the I wonder questions below.

I wonder what an author does. What do you think their work involves?

I wonder what an activist does. How do you think they help others?

### **Slide 6: An overview of her life**

An overview of Mary Prince's life

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

Use a world map to locate Bermuda.

**Talk about the hardships she faced and relate it to the theme of perseverance.**

Highlight Mary Prince's contribution to the abolition movement.

Share that Mary Prince's book, published in 1831, played a crucial role in the fight against slavery. If possible, show a picture of the book or a related historical artifact.

**Ask students if they know of any other books that have changed history. Discuss the power of storytelling in bringing about change and justice.**

### **Slide 7**

Reinforce the value of storytelling for bringing about change and justice.

Ask the children the following question and give time for them to share their answers:

**I wonder ... Have you ever been inspired by a story to do what was right?**

### **Slide 8**

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

Encourage students to think of their own stories as valuable.

**Engage students in a conversation about why their stories matter. Ask them how they think sharing stories can help others.**

Think together about why Christians believe that our stories matter to God, and to others.



## Slide 9 - 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.

## Activities to Develop Practices and Habits

### 1. Daily Gratitude and Reflection Journal

#### "Kindness Cards"

- **Description:** Instead of writing in journals, students create and exchange "Kindness Cards" once a week. 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.



### 3. Storytelling Circle

#### "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.

#### 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?