



The Exultation of the Holy Cross

John 3:13–17

At that time: Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'

Some things to think about

Back in the Old Testament, Moses lifted up a bronze snake on a pole so people who were sick could look at it and be healed. Jesus is saying he will be lifted up too – on the cross – to save and heal the whole world. This isn't just about looking up – it's about lifting our eyes to love, to hope, and to new life.

Jesus didn't come to punish people, but to show how much God loves us – all of us.

Activity

"Lifted Up" Paper Kites of Hope

Instructions:

1. Pupils fold and cut their paper into a kite shape (or use a printed template).
2. On the front of the kite, they write or draw an answer to:
3. "What do I believe Jesus came to bring us?"
4. (e.g. forgiveness, love, courage, second chances, joy, new life)
5. On the back, they write one way they can "lift others up" this week – a kind act, a word of encouragement, helping someone in need.
6. Decorate the kites and, if you like, attach string/ribbon to make a tail.
7. Display the kites in the classroom under the heading:
8. "Lifted Up by Love"

Materials needed:

- Sheets of A5 or A4 paper
- String or ribbon (optional)
- Colouring pens or pencils
- Scissors (if shaping the kites)

Teachers' notes

This passage from John 3:13–17 is part of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus and contains one of the most well-known summaries of Christian belief. Jesus explains that he, the "Son of Man", has come from heaven and will be "lifted up"—a reference to his crucifixion—just as Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness to heal the Israelites.

This act becomes a symbol of salvation, highlighting that belief in Jesus brings eternal life. The passage emphasises God's deep love for the world, shown through the giving of his only Son. Importantly, it clarifies that Jesus' mission is not one of condemnation but of redemption, offering hope and salvation to all who believe. This reading is often used to teach about God's grace, the purpose of Jesus' life and death, and the inclusive nature of Christian salvation.

Notes: