

Candlemas service at Blakesley School, 2010

When our Year Five and Six pupils heard that there would be no Diocese Candlemas service this year they were very disappointed. They had enjoyed going along 'en masse' with the rest of Key Stage Two. I suggested that they might like to hold their own service for the whole school, especially as they had been using materials from 'Lighting the Candle' as suggested by Philip Davies. This was a popular idea, so we had a 'thought shower' of ideas before calling in our very supportive Rector, Fr. John Hall, to run them past him and to ask permission to use the local Church.

We discussed either using symbolism (our current Re Topic) to illustrate the idea of light or putting on a play to tell the story of the Presentation of Jesus. The play won by a short head and the excellent 'Barnabas' website provided us with the basis for a script. The play was to be called 'Great Grandmother Anna' and told the story through the eyes of the prophetess Anna. Following some creative casting all twenty seven Year Five and Six pupils managed to be involved in acting it out.

There were no shortage of possible hymns. We had to take votes to whittle it down to five! The pupils chose 'Give Me Oil in my Lamp', 'Shine Jesus Shine', 'Light Up the Fire', 'We are Walking in the Light of God' and 'Seek Ye First'. Our church organist, who is also a supply teacher, came in and rehearsed them. They chose to sing 'Seek Ye First' unaccompanied as all pupils came forward to light candles which were placed on the votive stand.

After the candles were placed three pupils read prayers they had written: 'Dear God, Jesus is the Light of the World; let him only let see the good things in life, to lead us the right way and to shine on us all', 'Dear God, A candle gives light, a candle shows you the way, a candle lights up the good in people. Jesus gives us light, Jesus shows you the way, Jesus lights up the good in people. A candle is the light of a room, Jesus is the light of the world.', 'Jesus is the light of the world. He is like a candle burning day and night. Jesus shines upon the dark like the rising sun in the morning. He shines upon people with nightmares in the pitch black night, he sends light to lonely children who live on the streets. Today we pray that he will send light and make the poor people have a smile on their faces. Jesus is brighter than the sun and lighter than anything else in the universe. He sends the best light, but you can't see it, but it is still very bright.'

The whole service held the attention of the rest of the school from start to finish and was a very positive experience for the pupils who led it so well. It was good to have parents joining us and our PTA served coffee after the service.

Mary Barnett

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