

## Topic Focus

Caring for our environment, being an active citizen and beliefs about death

## Overview

The activities in this topic develop children's appreciation of what makes a burial ground so special, exploring its atmosphere, their feelings towards it and what burial grounds mean to the local community. Children will investigate the ways in which people use burial grounds, how they are cared for as a unique habitat and how they can get involved. The activities also provide children with an opportunity to reflect upon different attitudes towards death and how life is celebrated and remembered.

The activities are: Something Special, Unique Uses, People Power, Making Sense of Life and Death.

## Curriculum Links

This topic helps develop children's knowledge, skills and understanding in English, PSHE & Citizenship and RE.

### EYFS

Personal, social and emotional development  
Self-confidence and self-awareness  
Managing feelings and behaviour  
Making relationships

## EYFS, KS1 & KS2

### Key Skills

Reflecting  
Discussing  
Empathising  
Questioning  
Problem Solving  
Responding

### Key Words

Manage  
Conservation  
Volunteer  
Celebrate



### John Muir Award

**Discover**  
**Explore**  
**Conserve**  
**Share**



Try these activities if you are working towards any of the following badges and challenges:

**Rainbows** - Look and Learn

**Beavers** - Creative Challenge Award, Explore Activity, Faith Activity, Global Challenge

**Brownies** - Culture, Seasons, Wildlife Explorer

**Cubs** - Community Challenge, Global Conservation Activity

**Guides** - Community Action, Discovering Faith, Challenge 1

**Scouts**: Heritage Activity, My Faith Activity, World Faiths Activity, Environment Partnership Award, Community Challenge Award

## Unique Uses

The suggested role-play activities allow children to explore how different people use a burial ground for different reasons. Children will also learn how church and chapel yards were used in the past.

### Learning Outcomes

Children will:

- Work as a team to plan and perform
- Recognise that people have different views and use places differently

## Resources

### Community Character Cards

### Historic Character Cards

You can print the character cards with the illustration on one side and the text on the other, then laminate.

Various props

## Key Questions

***What do people do at a burial ground today? What did they do in the past?***

## Preparation

Simple props will bring this role-play activity to life and allow children to get into character. The props could include a flat cap, a pair of glasses, binoculars, toy bow and arrow, and a cup and plate.

Each character card contains details explaining how people use the churchyard or burial ground.

## Activity Ideas

**1. Community Characters** - Introduce the children to the invented characters from their local community on the community character cards e.g. Mrs Johns, whose family have been buried in the burial ground for generations. In groups children choose a character and together they

decide how they think their character would use the burial ground. Children take on the role of that character and act out how they would behave and what they would do there.

This activity could be steered into a debate using the character's point of view about what they would like to see happen in the burial ground and what they don't like to see happen.

**2. Historic Characters** - If you are visiting an older churchyard children could choose a character from the historic character cards and explore how people used the churchyard in the past.

## Plenary

Children could create their own character and act out a different way to use the burial ground.

Compare how the burial ground was used in the past to how it is used now. How would people feel it was used now as it was in the past?

## Back at School

### **Exciting Writing**

- Write scripts and dialogue for the burial ground characters.
- Take on the role of a journalist and interview one of the characters about changes in ways of using the burial ground over time. Find out how they feel about them. For example; how would Mr. Brown feel about a market happening in the churchyard? What might John Middleton think if he went to the churchyard as it is now?

## EYFS

Learn about the jobs people do in the burial ground through role-play activities – play the role of a gardener, vicar, churchwarden, or site manager.







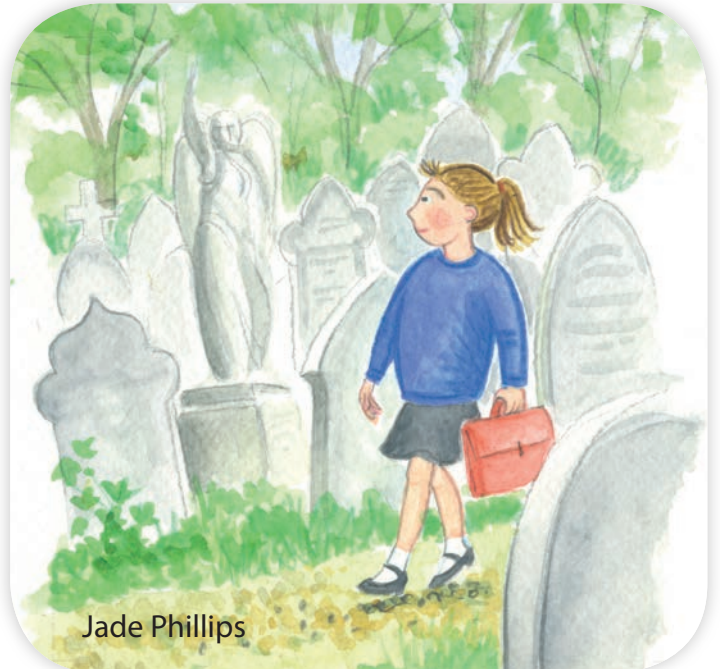
Vicar



Mrs Johns



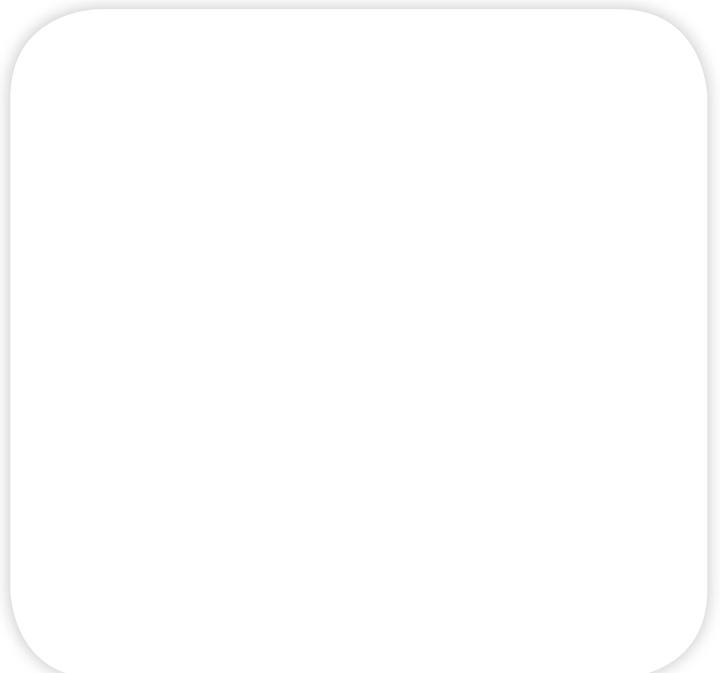
Mr Brown



Jade Phillips



Dr Middleton



### **Mrs Johns**

Mrs Johns lives close to the burial ground and her family has been buried there for generations. She visits her family's graves every week. She carefully lays flowers and clears away fallen leaves and twigs. She makes sure that everything is neat and tidy before she leaves.

### **The Vicar**

The Vicar likes to see the churchyard looking well cared for so everybody feels welcome. She is very grateful to all who help keep the churchyard looking its best, both volunteers and relatives who tend to the graves of their loved ones. She is also keen to create areas to make wildlife feel welcome too. She helps to manage an area of long grass where the wild plants can grow and flower. It is left to grow during the spring and by early summer it is full of colour.

### **Jade Phillips**

Jade Phillips walks through the burial ground every day on her way to school. She likes the walk because it is peaceful and away from the main road. Sometimes if she is very quiet she will see rabbits or foxes. One day she even saw a hedgehog, her favourite animal. When she is older Jade wants to help animals in the wild.

### **Mr Brown**

Mr Brown is a local gardener and each week he volunteers his time to tend to the plants in the burial ground. He keeps the grass short and neat and keeps the hedges and trees pruned. He is very proud of the work he does and loves his job. He likes it when people say how pretty the burial ground looks.

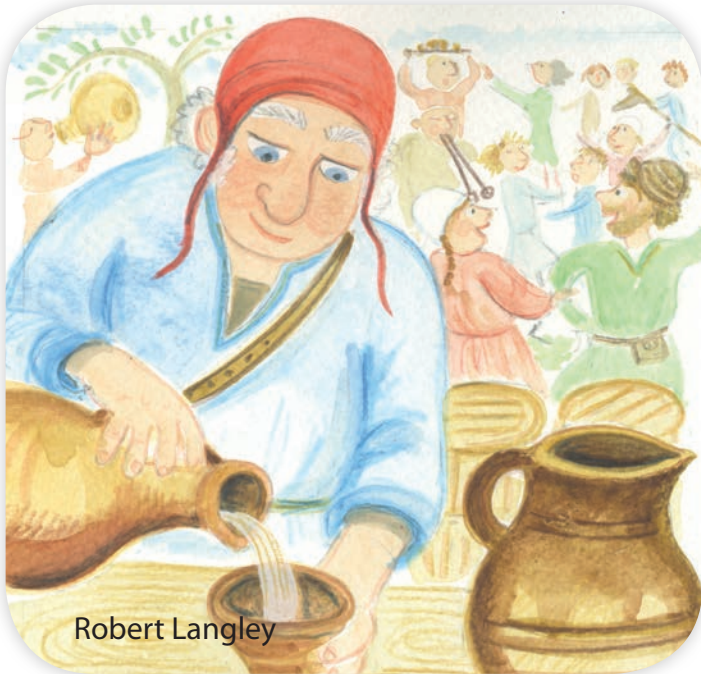
### **Make your own**

Draw your own person who uses the burial ground and think about why they use it and how they feel. You can draw yourself if you like.

### **Dr Middleton**

Dr Middleton is a local birdwatcher. Each morning he walks around his neighbourhood to keep fit and spot the birds before going to work. His favourite part of his morning walk is the short journey through the burial ground. It is peaceful and calm and a haven for birds. Dr Middleton enjoys the burial ground in all seasons and likes to see areas left for wildlife especially birds.





Robert Langley



Alfred Baker



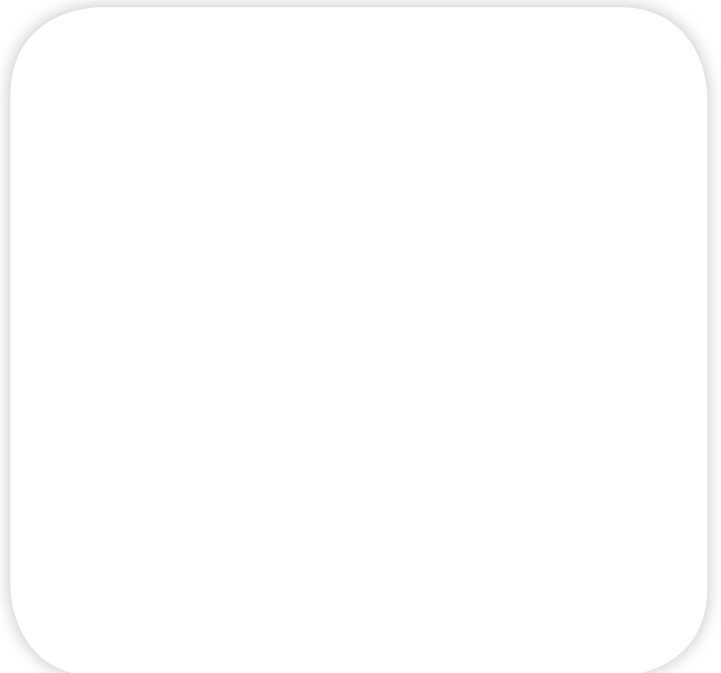
Thomas Black



John Middleton



Annie Drover



### **Alfred Baker**

Alfred Baker lives in the village. When he is not needed at home he attends school. His school is in a room above the porch of the church. The room is also used to store weapons so it can be very cramped in there. It is so cold in the winter that his feet turn blue and he cannot concentrate.

### **Robert Langley**

Robert Langley is the church warden and a very busy man. It is his job to organise the 'Church Ales'. The church ales is a very popular festival filled with eating, drinking and dancing. He brews ale and sells it at the festival to raise money to help the poor people living in the parish. The money raised also helps keep the church building in good repair.

### **John Middleton**

John Middleton lives in the village and after he has done all his work he walks up to the churchyard to meet his friends to watch the wrestling.

Mr Langley, the church warden sometimes make them a booth, so they can sit, cheer and watch out of the way of the archery and quoits.

John sometimes takes part in the churchyard ball games with his friends and enjoys the churchyard because it is the only public space in the village.

### **Thomas Black**

Thomas Black is an archer. He is called to the churchyard everyday for practice. He gathers with his friends in the church porch and sits on the step as he waits for his turn. The churchyard is the perfect place to practice as the church wall is the ideal place to lean the butts. He is the best archer in the village but when he was younger, he and his friends would often miss the butts and their arrows would graze the wall.

### **Make your own**

Draw your own person who used the burial ground and think about why they used it and how they felt.

### **Annie Drover**

Annie Drover lives in the next village. Each week she helps her family drive the geese into town to sell at the market in the churchyard. The geese are very noisy and Annie's dad has to shout and whistle to warn people they are coming. At the end of the day they head off to the churchyard market in the next village.