

1. Stepping stones

Use *Introducing the activity* plus one of the *Activities*, followed by *Drawing things together*. Please read the activities before making your choice. Activities marked with * are particularly suitable for younger pupils.

Teacher's notes

- Use a story where there is a clear progression in the plot or a clear development of character. Stories such as Esther (Esther 1-10) or Holy Week (Mark 11-15) have a strong plot. The story of Joseph (Genesis 37, 39-47) shows the development of character.
- This technique can also be used for the stages in a ceremony such as baptism or the steps in an argument. All these activities can be done as large versions for a display or smaller versions for pupil books.

Introducing the activity

Play a stepping stones game, e.g., from one side of the room to the other. Mark out a series of 'stepping stones' for crossing a 'river' or 'mud'. Talk about where we find stepping stones and invite pupils to share their experience of them. Stepping stones help us get from one side to another. Stepping stones for a story help us get from the beginning to the end.

* Activity 1: Story stepping stones

Tell your story, then discuss how the plot develops. Together, break the story down into the key events. Arrange the different events on paper stepping stones for display, or draw them on an interactive board. (They can later be moved around the board into the correct sequence). For very young pupils chalk the stones on the ground. Information can be printed and pupils can place the correct information and pictures on chairs by the correct 'stones'. Pupils can walk the story. (Do not place the papers on the floor as pupils might slip on them.) Pupils can add more information, questions and responses by the stones, either on a display or on the chairs.

Activity 2: Character stepping stones

Take a story and divide it into stepping stones to show the development of a person's character. With older pupils use a biography and, in discussion with the pupils, divide it into significant points discussing why these are significant in the development of this person. For example, significant events, decisions and influences in the life of Martin Luther King. Arrange these events, influences and decisions on stepping stones.

*Activity 3: Ceremony stepping stones

Explore a ceremony, such as confirmation or marriage, and create a series of stepping stones to show how the different parts of the ceremony follow each other. Relate the theme of the ceremony to their lives as appropriate.

Activity 4: Argument stepping stones

Explore an argument used to support a religious belief. For example, the belief that the world is so intricately designed that there must be a 'designer' of some sort. Break the argument down into its stages and create a class version of the stepping stones. Discuss the argument and add pupil responses beside the stepping stones. Pupils can create their own stepping stones based on the class version and add their own comments, questions and evaluation of the argument.

Drawing things together

Bring together what the pupils have learned from the story, ceremony or argument, sharing their insights, and using their questions as the basis for discussion. If you have used Activity 2, ask pupils to reflect on what stepping stones for their own lives might look like. Give pupils one paper 'stone' and ask them to think about one thing they would write on it that they are happy to share.