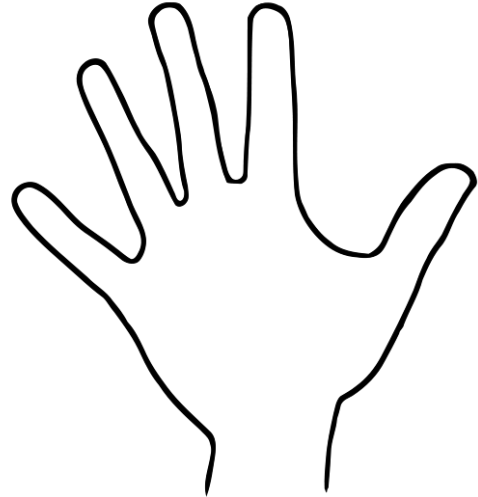


Teach me your ways, O Lord...?

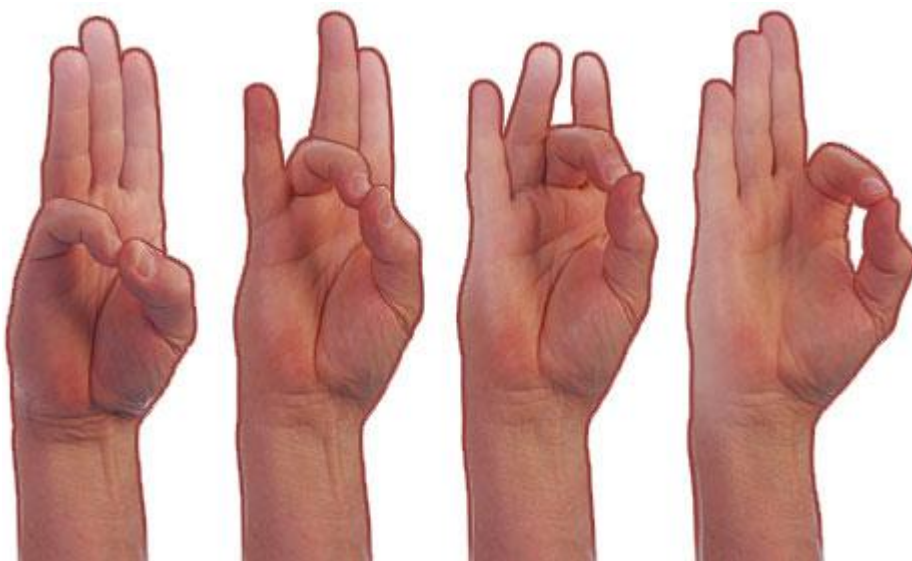
Is there a simple way of sharing our educational vision for church schools with teachers and children in primary schools?

We can expand the theology and deepen understanding in another document or in video-clips but can we convey it simply and memorably in the first place?



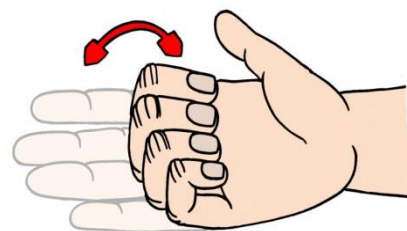
I tried this in a school last week with children from Reception to Year 6 as their collective worship and have since explored it with several heads – as a starting point in the conversation about what it means to be a church school.

If I was in a school all week, I would use this on Monday and expand each idea with a suitable story or bible verse later in the week.



GATHER

As children gather, choose a group to stand at the front and do some hand exercises while others arrive – stretching fingers right out and pulling in to build up strength. This is hard work and can become quite painful but it strengthens the fingers in the long term! Keep encouraging them ... ***stop for the greetings***



Greet children as usual or teach / use the following, using appropriate BSL signs:

Leader: God is good, all the time.

Everyone: All the time, God is good

Sing e.g.

- **God is good we sing and shout it' (Graham Kendrick)**
- **Swahili 'Mungu ni Mwema' – God is good**
- **'God is so good' in several languages**
- **God is good all the time (Don Moen)**
- **'Hands, hands, fingers, thumbs' (Doug Horley)**
- **Jesus' hands were kind hands**

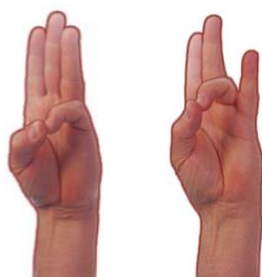
ENGAGE

Our hands work hard for us! We use them all day long. They hold our pencils and paintbrushes. They help us eat our food and answer our phones. They catch a ball, pick up rubbish or say good bye (wave your hand).

At school, we may be told to use 'gentle hands', kind hands, to remind us not to poke, or punch. We may put our hand up to ask something or give a good answer.

Some people communicate with their hands in sign language. Maybe you know how to say 'good morning' or 'thank you'. Maybe you can sign the Lord's Prayer!

Look carefully at your hands. 8 fingers 2 thumbs What do we know about our fingers and thumbs ...



Touch your thumb to your little finger, the smallest one, insignificant maybe – not very strong – sometimes called your 'pinkie'.

Touch your thumb to your second finger – your ring finger – sometimes there is a ring on this finger to show someone is married, a finger which stands for loving and caring. This finger needs its fellows to help it – it is often awkward to move and not very flexible on its own.

Touch your thumb to your middle finger, the tallest one – longer than the others, in the centre of your hand – is it the most important finger?

Touch your thumb to your pointing finger, your index finger – the one we point things out with, helping us follow words, or point out directions, showing the





way to go.

Now show me your thumbs. Thumbs are 'good' – show the good sign. Your thumbs are incredible – part of your hand but different. They enable you to grip. To hold on – they can also touch all the other fingers and help them to be more useful than they can ever be on their own.



Return to the children who were doing the finger stretches.

Let's thank them with our hands. We could clap or give them 'high fives'. *Do the latter!*

You may like to say: Our school is a great place to be. If we could give the school a 'high five' what would we give it a high five for? Take some answers as to why our school is a great place!

Show children the 'thumbs up' sign. Christians believe God is good.

If not done earlier, sing here.....



Show children a hand. I want to show you how we can use our hands to learn what our school should be like in God's eyes.

(Show your thumbs and fingers clearly in this section so children connect the thumb with 'God is good'.)

Our little finger stands for DIGNITY. Show thumb and touch little finger.

God is good. God loves each one of us. We are special and important to him. However small we are on the outside, or however small we feel inside, God knows us and notices us. In this school, we try to remember that God loves each of us, children and adults – everyone is someone, everyone matters. We can hold our heads up with dignity – God has made each of us for a purpose in this world and in our school.

Our ring finger reminds us of our LIFE TOGETHER (Love). Show thumb and touch ring finger.

God is good and being part of his family is good. In God's we are called to work together and learn to love each other. Everyone is needed but we are not all good at the same things – we need each other. In this school we look out for anyone who needs help, children and adults. We support each other with love, we are partners in learning. It's not always easy to get along though ...

Our middle finger stands for HOPE. Show thumb and touch middle finger.

God is good and he wants all his children to know that his love and forgiveness are bigger than anything. God gives us hope. If we fail or go wrong, we can try again. If things hurt

or fall apart, it is not the end. In this school we find hope and a new start whenever we need it. *And we can find hope at the end of life too because not even death can separate us from God's love.*

Our index finger points to WISDOM. Show thumb and touch index finger.

God is good. He wants us to learn. Learning is our number one job in school (*upright index finger = number one*). The Bible says (*index finger lifted above head = God*) God is infinite, the universe is vast and life is an amazing mystery – we should never give up learning (*point forward*). In this school, we want you to learn but we also want you to be wise, to learn wisdom. We want you to use your learning in good ways, God's ways.

Count the words again with your thumb on your fingers:

Dignity, Life together (love), Hope, Wisdom

RESPOND

Let's use these words in our prayers:

Lord, thank you that everyone has **dignity** as your child. You love us so much. You know all about us. Help us remember that everyone matters to you, however small.

Lord, give us love for those we live with and all those we work with in school. Help us to support each other in our **life together**.

Lord, we are sorry for things we do wrong and for bad things which spoil your world. Forgive us and help us. Thank you that you give us **hope** and the chance to start again. Help us offer your hope and forgiveness to others.

Lord, thank you for a whole universe to learn about; help us enjoy learning new things. Show us your ways and help us to grow in **wisdom** just like Jesus did.

Amen

(You can use your fingers for each section of the prayer and include 'Lord, in your mercy / hear our prayer' if children are familiar with this. Some very quiet music can be played beneath the prayer if wished.)

SEND

Shake hands with those around you and greet each other: Peace be with you. Put on music and all leave.

OR give a high five to three different people near you. Our hands can help us remember the important things about our school – putting these things into action will make us a school that is really worth a 'high five'.

OR try **Hands, hands, fingers, thumbs** – Doug Horley, as a lively sending song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=erILMUxgEHM>