

## Learning from the Great Fire of London

Learn more about the Great Fire of London and how Londoners pulled together in a time of crisis to support each other. Not only did brave Londoners fight the fire, but they also rebuilt London full of hope, opportunity and pride after this disaster. Let's find out what we can learn from them! To remind yourself about the Great Fire of London, read our **Story Sheet** before starting the activities.



### **Activity 1: Fighting the Fire**

Fighting the enormous fire was a scary and overwhelming challenge for the London of 1666 because they didn't have the Fire Brigade we are so lucky to have keeping us safe today.

We all know, from lots of practising, that when we think there is a fire, we go outside to a safe place, quickly and calmly. Once we are safe, do you know what special number we call to get the Fire Brigade to help us? Ask an adult for help and then write the number below:

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Unfortunately, during the Great Fire of London, they didn't have a special number, or phones, fire engines or professional fire fighters! In fact, back then, they didn't even have running water or electricity! Even so, they were very clever and invented lots of ways to fight the fire together. Keep reading to find out what they did and to think about what you would have done...

The people of London invented lots of useful and effective tools to help them battle fires, like **fire hooks** to pull down the burning buildings or **water squirts** to try to get the water as high as possible.

**Use the space below to design something you would have invented to fight the fire and save St Paul's Cathedral...but there is a catch! You must not use electricity.**



This is a fire engine from the Great Fire of London.

Your invention should help stop the fire from spreading, but use your imagination!

Is it big or small?

Does it use water or sand?

Can it climb up the tower?

Can it stop the wind from blowing?

Does it fly through the sky?

Is it colourful?

Does it have lots of levers?

How is it powered?

Londoners had something very important to fight the fire that didn't include special tools. This was **teamwork**! The whole of London pulled together to fight the fire and worked as a team to save as many houses as they could. The **human chain** was one way they did this.

Try and work as a team with your family or your class to recreate your own human chain at home. To be successful you need to be quick, careful and efficient!

***What you will need:***

A bowl or bucket

Some water

Your family/class

***Step 1:***

Fill your bucket or bowl with a little bit of water (less than half full).

***Step 2:***

Choose a starting point and an end point. Spread yourselves out (stretch your arms out from your sides to make sure you are not touching) and make a line from one point to the next.

***Step 3:***

On the count of 3, pass the bucket/bowl steadily and carefully, but quickly and efficiently down the line and back again without spilling a drop!

***Step 4:***

If you spill any water, mop it up and try again! If you manage it, time yourself and see if you can go faster!

Working together and team work is never more important than when times are difficult. Use the inspiration from the Londoners of 350 years ago to think about how you and your family can work as a team to make tricky things easier.

Perhaps you can split up and complete tidying tasks around the house or classroom? Maybe at home you can work as a team to bake a cake together? Think of three things you can do as a team and list them below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Activity 2: How did they feel?**

We always learn about what the Londoners did during the Great Fire of London and how they reacted swiftly with action, but how did they feel? What was it really like? How did they cope?



How do you think Londoners felt when they saw the Great Fire approaching? Share three words below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How do you think they felt having to flee their homes? Share three different words below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How do you think they felt when their Cathedral was destroyed? Share 3 final new words below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

There was one way a few famous Londoners (like Samuel Pepys) decided to share their experiences of the Great Fire of London and other events. They did this by writing a diary and 350 years later we are still being nosey and reading them!

Let's read some of **John Evelyn's** diary to find out how people felt about the Great Fire of London. Ask an adult to help you read his diary and answer the question below.

**3<sup>rd</sup> September 1666**

*All the sky was of a fiery aspect, like the top of a burning oven, and the light seen above forty miles round about for many nights. God grant mine eyes may never behold the like, who now saw above 10,000 houses all in one flame! The noise and cracking and thunder of the impetuous flames, the shrieking of women and children, the hurry of people, the fall of towers, houses, and churches, was like a hideous storm; ... the ruins resembling the picture of Troy. London was, but is no more!*

**5th September, 1666**

*The poor inhabitants were dispersed about St. George's Fields, and Moorfields, as far as Highgate, and several miles in circle, some under tents, some under miserable huts and hovels, many without a rag, or any necessary utensils, bed or board...In this calamitous condition, I returned with a sad heart to my house, blessing and adoring the distinguishing mercy of God to me and mine, who, in the midst of all this ruin, was like Lot, in my little Zoar, safe and sound.*

How do you think John Evelyn felt about the Great Fire of London? Look at the describing words he uses and his punctuation to help you. What does this tell you?

## Keeping a Diary

Writing a diary can be a really useful and relaxing activity when times are stressful or confusing. Keeping a diary allows you to express your thoughts and feelings and make sense of them. After writing feelings down, people can feel calmer, happier and clearer.

John Evelyn wrote about when he felt sad or happy. He also made plans for the future, and made a note of daily goings-on and what he noticed.

Perhaps you could try writing a diary as a new hobby to boost your mood, keep a record of your life and discover or develop a love for writing!

### Here are some top tips for keeping a diary:

#### *If you are under 7:*

- Each day write how you are **feeling** and try and think why that might be. Sometimes taking a few big, deep breaths can help you figure out how you feel.
- Keep a record of any **nature** you can see in your garden or when you are out on a walk. Write the proper names of the birds, plants and insects you discover and draw pictures of what they look like.
- Write down what you did that day. What did you enjoy the most? Why? Make sure to **write the date** so you can look back on it later!

#### *If you are over 7 try the above and add the ideas below as well:*

- Make plans for the **future**. Write ideas about what you would like to do when you grow up, make a list of countries you would like to visit or goals you would like to achieve.
- Fill your diary with art and **get creative!** Write poems, stories or jokes. Include drawings, photographs or doodles. Decorate it how you like and use your favourite pencils and pens.
- **Make lists** and learn more about you! List your favourite songs, films, foods or colours. Learn more about what you like and make lists of things to do to explore your interests.
- Whatever you include in your diary, make sure you make **special time** for it. Choose a special place to write and give yourself time to think.

***Activity 3: Rebuilding Hope***

Sadly, St Paul's Cathedral was destroyed during the Great Fire of London. However, the St Paul's Cathedral we know so well now, from the London skyline, with its domed roof, has been a symbol of hope for over 300 years! It was rebuilt after the fire to renew Londoners' hope and provide them with a special place of awe and wonder, to meet in, pray and reflect.



*Under the Dome of St Paul's Cathedral*

The new Cathedral was designed by the architect **Sir Christopher Wren**. The Cathedral he designed has brought happiness to so many people since the Great Fire of London. Use this page to design a special place that you think will bring happiness to people when Social Distancing comes to end and we are able to explore these special places again with our family and friends.

Sir Christopher Wren wanted his Cathedral to be **strong, beautiful and useful**. How is your special place strong? What makes it beautiful? What are people going to use your special place for? Design your special place of hope below:



Explore <https://www.stpauls.co.uk/learning-faith/schools-families/distance-learning> for more architecture activities, discover the story of the Phoenix, and explore how the Cathedral was built. Share your inventions and designs with us @stpaulseduc.

**We look forward to welcoming you to St Paul's Cathedral soon!**