Lesson plan(s)

Resources and preparation needed
- **Resource A** Copies of the poem sections (on one colour paper, cut in half)
- **Resource B** Copies of the Bible verses (on a different colour paper, cut in half)
- **Resource C** Copies of the whole poem
- **Resource D** Copies of the whole poem with Bible verses
- **Resource E** Film clip – *Despised and Rejected*.

Learning objectives
- To closely analyse and understand the language of the poem
- To consider the links between the poem and the Bible verses which inspired it
- To develop an appreciation of Rossetti’s use of intertextuality.

Starter activity – introduction and predictions
- Write title on board ‘Despised and Rejected’. Ask students to
  - Respond to the title (some may recognise religious connotations)
  - Make predictions about the poem’s content.

Main activity 1 – individual analysis
- Distribute the poem sections (on one colour paper) [Resource A] and the Bible verses (on a different colour paper) [Resource B] to students
  - Ideally there should be one per student in a class of sixteen, but this can obviously be adapted depending on the size of the class
  - Do not state that one colour is from the poem and one colour is from the Bible at this stage.

  - Students complete the following tasks on their section/sheet:
    - Sum up in one sentence what they think it is about
    - Underline/highlight the key words
    - Annotate around the text with ideas, images, and mood created
    - Sketch an image or images to go with the text
      - As the language and ideas are harder in some sections than others, the teacher can differentiate by choosing to which student they allocate each section. Students could also be allowed to discuss their section with a partner if they are struggling.

Main activity 2 – market place activity
- Students are to move around the room:
  - First, discuss their findings with other students, and see if anyone comes up with any similar ideas and images
  - Next, students should try to find a partner who has a different colour piece of paper, whose ideas most closely match theirs.

  - Teacher reveals (if students haven’t already worked it out!) that:
    - One colour is sections from the poem and the other colour is Bible verses which inspired the poem
    - The title *Despised and Rejected* comes from the Bible, indicating how Rossetti used the Bible as a basis for her poem (‘He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.’ Isaiah 53:3).
Main activity 3 – group work
- Divide the class into two, according to sheet colour, and appoint a ‘team leader’ for each group
  - The poem sections group have to try to order themselves correctly to construct the poem
  - The Bible verse group have to make a spider-diagram of the themes and messages contained in the Bible verses.

Main activity 4 – whole class reading and discussion
- Distribute copies of the whole poem [Resource C] and read through together
  - Clear up any difficulties with tricky language and problems of understanding.
- Discuss, and annotate around the poem:
  - What is the poem about?
    - Is it about what the students had anticipated?
    - Why might a Christian be concerned with ‘opening their doors’ to the poor?
  - What is the ‘story’ of the poem?
    - Did the students manage to order themselves correctly?
  - What are the main ideas, themes, and images in the poem?
    - Which ones had students already picked out?
  - What is the message of the poem?
    - Why did Rossetti write it?
    - Do these messages link with the themes and messages which the Bible verse group wrote on their spider-diagram?

Main activity 5 – considering intertextuality
- Read the poem again
  - This time the students with the Bible verses sheets should interrupt (stand up/buzz?) when they think they have reached a section of the poem which is inspired by their Bible verse
    - They need to try and justify their link.
  - Now watch the Film clip [Resource E]
    - Ask students to comment on its impact.
  - Distribute copies of the whole poem with the Bible verses [Resource D].

Plenary - reflecting on Rossetti’s use of the Bible
- Students should organise themselves into their poem section/Bible verse pairs. Work in these pairs to discuss and complete the following sentence starter prompts:
  - The Bible verses help the poem make sense in that…
  - The Bible verses make the poem more powerful because…
  - Together, the poem and the Bible verses which inspired it communicate that…
  - Rossetti’s relationship with the Bible is…
  - Rossetti believed that people should…
  - Feedback ideas to the class.

Homework
Go to www.crossref-it.info/textguide/The-poetry-of-Christina-Rossetti/28/1823 to add to annotations on the poem.
Resources

Resource A

My sun has set, I dwell
In darkness as a dead man out of sight;
And none remains, not one, that I should tell
To him mine evil plight
This bitter night.

I will make fast my door
That hollow friends may trouble me no more.
'Friend, open to Me.'—Who is this that calls?
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:
Cease crying, for I will not hear
Thy cry of hope or fear.
Others were dear,
Others forsook me: what art thou indeed
That I should heed
Thy lamentable need?
Hungry should feed,
Or stranger lodge thee here?
'Friend, My Feet bleed.
Open thy door to Me and comfort Me.'
I will not open, trouble me no more.
Go on thy way footsore,
I will not rise and open unto thee.
'Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see
Who stands to plead with thee.'

'Open, lest I should pass thee by, and thou
One day entreat My Face
And howl for grace,
And I be deaf as thou art now.
Open to Me.'
Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
Leave me in peace:
Fear not that I should crave
Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
What, shall I not be let
Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?
But all night long that voice spake urgently:
'Open to Me.'
Still harping in mine ears:
'Rise, let Me in.'

Pleading with tears:
'Open to Me that I may come to thee.'
While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:

'My Feet bleed, see My Face,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
My Heart doth bleed for thee,
Open to Me.'

So till the break of day:
Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood for evermore.
For the enemy ... hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore ... my heart within me is desolate.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'Come ... inherit the kingdom ... For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in...

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire ... For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ...’
Behold, I [Jesus] stand at the door, and knock

When once the master of the house ... hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are ... depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth...
Jesus saith ... ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.’

If any man hear my voice, and open the door,
I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.
Thomas said unto them,
Except I shall see in [Jesus’] hands the print of the nails, and ... thrust my hand into his side,
I will not believe.

And [the Israelites] shall take of the blood [of the lamb], and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses.
... and when I [God] see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.
Despised and Rejected

My sun has set, I dwell
In darkness as a dead man out of sight;
And none remains, not one, that I should tell
To him mine evil plight
This bitter night.
I will make fast my door
That hollow friends may trouble me no more.
‘Friend, open to Me.’--Who is this that calls?
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:
Cease crying, for I will not hear
Thy cry of hope or fear.
Others were dear,
Others forsook me: what art thou indeed
That I should heed
Thy lamentable need?
Hungry should feed,
Or stranger lodge thee here?
‘Friend, My Feet bleed.
Open thy door to Me and comfort Me.’
I will not open, trouble me no more.
Go on thy way footsore,
I will not rise and open unto thee.
‘Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see
Who stands to plead with thee.
Open, lest I should pass thee by, and thou
One day entreat My Face
And howl for grace,
And I be deaf as thou art now.
Open to Me.’
Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
Leave me in peace:
Fear not that I should crave
Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
What, shall I not be let
Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?
But all night long that voice spake urgently:
'Open to Me.'
Still harping in mine ears:
'Rise, let Me in.'
Pleading with tears:
'Open to Me that I may come to thee.'
While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:
'My Feet bleed, see My Face,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
My Heart doth bleed for thee,
Open to Me.'
So till the break of day:
Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood forevermore.
Intertextuality and the context of reception: *Despised and Rejected* by Christina Rossetti

Resource D

*Despised and rejected*

Isaiah 53:3  
He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

My sun has set, I dwell  
In darkness as a dead man out of sight;  
And none remains, not one, that I should tell  
To him mine evil plight  
This bitter night.

Psalm 143:3-4  
For the enemy ... hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.  
Therefore ... my heart within me is desolate.

I will make fast my door  
That hollow friends may trouble me no more.  
‘Friend, open to Me.’—Who is this that calls?  
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:  
Cease crying, for I will not hear  
Thy cry of hope or fear.

Others were dear,  
Others forsook me: what art thou indeed  
That I should heed  
Thy lamentable need?  
Hungry should feed,  
Or stranger lodge thee here?

Matthew 25:34-35, 41-2  
Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand,  
‘Come ... inherit the kingdom ...’  
For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat:  
I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in...

41Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire ...’  
42For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.  
43I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ...’
'Friend, My Feet bleed. 
Open thy door to Me and comfort Me.'
I will not open, trouble me no more.
Go on thy way footsore,
I will not rise and open unto thee.
'Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see 
Who stands to plead with thee.
Revelation 3:20  
Behold, I [Jesus] stand at the door, and knock:

Open, lest I should pass thee by, and thou
One day entreat My Face
And howl for grace,
And I be deaf as thou art now.

When once the master of the house ... hath shut to the door, 
and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, 
open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence 
ye are ...  
Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.  
There shall be 
weeping and gnashing of teeth...

Open to Me.'
Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
Leave me in peace:
Fear not that I should crave
Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
What, shall I not be let
Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?
But all night long that voice spake urgently:
'Open to Me.'
Still harping in mine ears:
'Rise, let Me in.'

John 5:8  
Jesus saith ... 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.'
Pleading with tears:

'Open to Me that I may come to thee.'

Revelation 3:20 20‘if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’

While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:

'My Feet bleed, see My Face,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,

John 20:25-7 25[Thomas] said unto them, Except I shall see in [Jesus’] hands the print of the nails, and ... thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

My Heart doth bleed for thee,
Open to Me.’

So till the break of day:
Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood for evermore.

Exodus 12:7, 13 7And [the Israelites] shall take of the blood [of the lamb], and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses. ... 13and when I [God] see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

John 1:29 29John seeth Jesus ... and saith, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’