



Freedom

An Easter Assembly for 16- to 18-year-olds

Resources

PowerPoint presentation

Video clip (www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/forrest-gump/i-gotta-find-bubba)

Aims:

To reflect on the meaning of Jesus' resurrection for Christians

To reflect on how we can help bring freedom to the lives of those around us

Introduction

Welcome the pupils to their Easter assembly and introduce yourself.

Explain that we are going to start by watching a short clip and asking them to think about what this could have to do with Easter.

So what's the link between what we just saw and Easter? It was a rescue mission! Forrest Gump was on a mission to save his best friend in the jungle and ended up saving a number other soldiers. Many Christians believe that Jesus' death and resurrection was the ultimate rescue mission for humanity, and this is what we're going to explore today.

Story

Before we can understand how Christians see the Easter story in that way, we need to know some background information.

What do Christians believe people are being rescued from?

Christian theology teaches that originally God's creation was good, and people were made in God's good image. Yet through temptation, sin was brought into the world and people were separated from God. Just as Adam and Eve were separated from God by being sent from the garden of Eden, all creation is separated from God by sin and death.

So it is a basic idea in Christian theology that mankind needs to be reconciled to God.

What is sin?

1 John 5:1

All wrongdoing is sin



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Sin is basically stuff we do and think that hurts us and other people. Christians believe God wants people to thrive and live life in all its fullness, to reflect God's good image. When we do stuff that stops us or other people doing this - that is sin.

What is atonement?

Atonement (at-one-ment) is the reconciliation of men and women to God through the death of Jesus.

There are various different theories explaining atonement. God's rescue is so big that we use different pictures and metaphors to explain how Jesus' death and resurrection makes all things right. But we are going to focus on just one of these theories - the belief that Jesus' resurrection is about God rescuing us. About God rescuing us from sin and death. It tells us that nothing can stop the love of God, not even death - and the resurrection means we are reconciled to God.

Acts 2:23-24

'This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.' (NIV)

This is why Christians think the resurrection of Jesus is such good news. It shows us that God's love is bigger than sin and death, and that God's love can overcome anything that holds us back.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is on a rescue mission too. Its members believe there are things that are stopping people flourish, stopping them being everything God made them to be. These things stop people reflecting God's good image. Some of these things are addictions, debt, loneliness, greed - The Salvation Army tries to help these people so that they too can be set free from the things holding them back.

This is what Easter is all about - declaring that there is new hope, and we don't need to be held back or controlled by the things that stop us living life in all its fullness. Easter tells us that Jesus has rescued us!

Challenge

So our challenge today is to look at ourselves and others in light of the Easter story.

Are there things that are holding you back, that are enslaving you? Are there steps you need to take to be free? It could be a bad relationship, an addiction or fear. Easter is about hope, and how Jesus made a way out. Have a think now about yourself and how you can break free.



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We've also heard about how The Salvation Army is helping others to be set free from whatever is holding them back. How can you be a person that helps those around you to be the best they can be? How can you be an encourager, someone who inspires people, someone who gets alongside people who need help to break free from the things that are controlling them? Easter for Christians is about good news. How can you be good news for your family, friends and community today?

Prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you that you are love, and that love is stronger than sin and death. Thank you that through Jesus' resurrection we can be free. We pray that you would break down any obstacles in our lives that stop us living life in all its fullness, and we pray that you would give us the strength and courage to speak freedom into the lives of others. We pray that Easter would bring hope to those that are hopeless in our community. Teach us what part we can play.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

