



New Hope

A Secondary Easter Assembly

Resources:

- PowerPoint presentation
- Pursuit of Happiness video clip (www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/the-pursuit-of-happyness/happiness)

Aim:

To reflect on the meaning of Easter and on how the message of hope might be relevant to your own life today.

Introduction

Introduce yourself to the students and welcome them to their Easter assembly.

Video Clip

Today we are going to be thinking about hope. We're going to start by watching a clip from a film *The Pursuit of Happiness*.

This clip is from the end of the film and this is a true story about a man called Chris Gardner. He has big dreams for himself and his family but things aren't working out for him financially. Chris eventually has an opportunity to be a stockbroker, but first he has to go through a long internship which doesn't pay any money and may not even result in a job. Chris decides to do it. But when his wife leaves him and he is evicted, he finds himself homeless and has to take care of his son on his own. The two end up living on the street and struggling to get by. But Chris is hopeful for the future and determined not to give up. Let's take a look at how things end - [show the video clip].

Story

This links to the theme of today's assembly. It was hope in what was to come that kept Chris Gardner going in the time that he and his son were homeless. Today we're thinking about hope and Easter.

In the Bible we're told that Jesus was arrested, tried and then crucified. Jesus had claimed to be the son of God - and now he was dying on a cross. In the Gospel of Luke we read how this came across to some of those watching the crucifixion (slide 2):

The people stood there staring at Jesus, and the ringleaders made faces, taunting: 'He saved others. Let's see him save himself! The Messiah of God - ha! The Chosen - ha!'.... One of the criminals hanging alongside cursed him: 'Some Messiah you are! Save yourself! Save us!' Luke 23:35-39 (The Message)





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Imagine that you were one of Jesus' followers watching this, hearing this. Imagine you had given up your job and left your home to follow Jesus. How would you be feeling right now? (slide 3)

You're sad to lose a friend and a teacher, but you may agree with some of those things that were said - why doesn't Jesus stop all this, why isn't he fighting for his life? Why did he let me give up everything for a new way of life if it's just going to all be over with his death now? You feel useless and hopeless. You're wondering what could be next, what to do with your life now.

But we know that this isn't how it ends! Three days later Jesus rises from the dead (slide 4). For his disciples this was a new hope - that even death cannot defeat Jesus. What had seemed to be a hopeless situation has transformed into a hope that is bigger than they ever imagined!

Challenge

We can all relate to situations that seem hopeless - whether it's to do with family, friends, school or something else. We've all felt like we've made a big mistake at some point or that someone keeps letting us down.

But the Easter story shows us that even when there appears to be no way forward, we can hope for something new and better, rather than have fear about the current position we are in. In the Bible book of 1 John it says (slide 5):

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.

1 John 4:18 (NIV)

Hope carries on, no matter what the odds. Hope doesn't care what others think; hope chooses not to be pulled down by the negativity of others. But fear - fear wants to stop you fulfilling your dreams, fear wants you to think you're not good enough to do something, not attractive enough, not clever enough.

At The Salvation Army we believe that everyone should have a future to hope in (slide 6). This is why we support people suffering with addictions, homeless people and people in prison, just to name a few. Many of these people think they have no reason to hope; but we try to help them rebuild their lives by showing them love.

Whatever the situation you are facing, however hopeless it seems, remember that there will come a time when something new will come. Choose to hope in this and not to fear.





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Reflection

It might be that you could bring hope to the lives of others by showing them love. In the next few minutes take some time to think of ways that you could bring hope to others. It doesn't matter how small it is - just think of one thing you could do that would make someone feel better, feel valued. That might be as simple as saying 'Hi!' to someone who is on their own, or offering to go and get the shopping for an elderly neighbour.

Prayer

Dear Lord,
Thank you for Easter and the hope of new life through Jesus' resurrection. We pray that you would guide us to be people that bring hope to others every day. Teach us to not be fearful but to know your perfect love in all areas of our lives.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

