



A New Start...

Secondary Assembly

Additional Resources:

PowerPoint presentation
Resolution Signs

Aim:

To reflect on how new starts are important for ourselves and for others.

Introduction

Wish the students a Happy New Year and introduce yourself.

Activity

Ask the pupils to put their hands up if they have made a New Year's resolution. Ask a couple of pupils to share what they have decided to do/change/give up. You may also want to share one of your own!

Now ask for ten volunteers to hold up the cards. (Or, if it's easier, you may just want to give the cards to ten pupils on the front row and ask them to stand and face the rest of the assembly.)

Then ask for one volunteer and explain that they need to decide what order they think the resolutions go in, from most popular resolution to tenth popular, allowing them to move the pupils holding the cards into the order they think. When they are finished you can read out the resolutions in the correct order below, asking the pupils to step forward when their card is read out!

Top ten 2013 New Year's resolutions*

- 1 Travel
- 2 Get fit
- 3 Relax more
- 4 Quit smoking
- 5 Stop drinking as much
- 6 Lose weight
- 7 Do something charitable
- 8 Get a new job
- 9 Save money
- 10 Learn something new

*metro.co.uk/2012/12/27/top-10-new-years-resolutions-what-to-take-up-and-give-up-in-2013-3329991/



Schools and
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Unit



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Thank the volunteers and ask them to sit down.

Unfortunately many people don't keep these resolutions. A study last year showed that 95% of people in the UK make resolutions but the majority give up after a month or even before!*

Let's hope that whatever ours are, we can all do better than that!

But January is the time when we think about what we want this year and how we might want a fresh start in some areas of our lives. We might say to ourselves, 'This year I'm going to do this differently' or 'I'm going to start doing this.' It can be seen as a chance to have a new start.

* www.revolution.channel4.com

Story

The Salvation Army believes everyone deserves a fresh start - and not just at the beginning of January! We try to help people rebuild their lives if they have been through a difficult time or if they have made some bad decisions. This is why we:

- Provide Lifehouses, drop-in centres and programmes for homeless people
- Visit prisoners and support their families
- Help reunite family members that have lost touch
- Help people find a way out of poverty

These are just some of the ways we try to help people have a fresh start.

Challenge

We do this because we are a Christian church and we want to treat people in the way that we believe God treats us. In the Bible we are told that God wants to give us fresh chances again and again, no matter what has gone wrong or however we have acted in the past.

In the Bible this is what we are told about God:

'If you, God, kept records on wrongdoings, who would stand a chance?

As it turns out, forgiveness is your habit, and that's why you're worshipped.'

(Psalm 130:3-4 The Message).





A New Start..

And just as God lets us all start again, we're also told that we must give others a chance to start again too. Jesus said we should keep forgiving people again and again:

'At that point Peter got up the nerve to ask, "Master, how many times do I forgive a brother or sister who hurts me? Seven?"

Jesus replied, "Seven! Hardly. Try seventy times seven."

(Matthew 18:21-22 The Message)

This can be a really difficult thing to do if someone has hurt you. But as we think about New Year's resolutions and the opportunity we have to start again, let's remember that this may also be an opportunity to give others a fresh start too, as Jesus said we should.

Reflection

Let's take a moment now and think about what a fresh start means for each of us as individuals, and what it might mean for some of the relationships we have with our friends and family. Is there an area of our lives where we need a fresh start or to give someone else the chance for a fresh start?

Prayer (optional)

Dear God,

Thank you that you give us the opportunity to have a new start at any time of the year. We pray that this new year would bring us new opportunities and new friendships. We pray that you would help us forgive others around us, just as you forgive us.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.