

Be a STAR



GIVE A GIFT LIGHT UP A LIFE

A Christmas assembly for secondary schools

Resources

- PowerPoint presentation
- Would you rather..? Volunteer signs

Aims

- To reflect on what is important at Christmas
- To consider helping those families and individuals in your community that won't be receiving any presents this Christmas

Introduction

Welcome the students to the assembly and introduce yourself. Explain that in today's assembly we are going to be thinking about what is most important for you about Christmas.

Activity

Ask for two volunteers to hold the two signs (standing with a good amount of space in between them) and then ask for additional two volunteers to take part in an activity where they will be deciding what is important to them at Christmas. Read out the two statements on the signs (Christmas with all the presents you ever wanted but alone or Christmas with your family and friends but no presents).

Tell the volunteers to stand at the statement they would rather have this Christmas if they had to choose. When they have made their decision ask them to explain why that's most important to them.

You may also want to then pose the question to everyone, by holding up the two statements and asking for hands up when you hold the one they think is most important.

You could ask a few pupils to explain their opinions too as they have their hands up for the one they agree with.

Explain that even if some of you think that a day's rest from our family might be nice, having people around us is what we need to stay healthy. Humans have a need for inclusion and for group relationships. Being on your own

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doesn't just make you feel a little bit down it's actually damaging for your health. Sadly half a million elderly people spend Christmas on their own each year*.

The Salvation Army believe that everyone should have people to share Christmas with; because of this we help people in the community in a number of different ways:

- Providing a Christmas dinner for people in the community who would usually be on their own at Christmas, or for those who can't manage to cook for themselves. This could be elderly or disabled people, people who are homeless, or those who don't have any family they can be with.
- Salvation Army centres and hostels celebrate Christmas with residents who have no other place to go at Christmas, providing a place where people can feel they belong and are valued and loved.
- Visiting elderly care homes or children's homes to lead a carol service and show the residents that they aren't forgotten and that they are important and valued members of the community.

But what I've come to ask you to help with is the other option you had earlier - a Christmas without any presents. For some families and individuals this is sadly a reality they will be facing and we want to change this with your help.

Challenge - Christmas Present Appeal

Every year The Salvation Army has a Christmas Present Appeal and this gives you an opportunity to make a real difference to children who might otherwise not have any presents.

Through this appeal we are asking everyone to buy an extra present when they do their Christmas shopping and to donate it so it can be given to someone who otherwise would not be getting a present. It can mean such a lot to a person to know that someone has thought of them, even if they don't know who that person is.

Talk about the kinds of people in your own community who might receive gifts, eg children or teenagers, people in prison or their families, elderly people with no family, people who are homeless etc.

* Source: Age UK

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If you decide you want to donate a present, just remember that it needs to be new, but not wrapped up in Christmas paper, so that the people sorting out the donations can make sure that each person receives the most appropriate gift.

Mention any other information about the types of presents needed, where to donate presents or where they will be collected etc.

Reflection

This Christmas wouldn't it be amazing if we all played our part in making sure people in our community aren't in the situation we thought about at the start of the assembly - having a Christmas without presents. Let's take a moment to think about what Christmas is like for us and what a difference a gift would make to those that don't have anything to look forward to this Christmas.

Prayer (optional)

Dear God

Thank you that you love us all and your desire is that no one would be alone or without someone showing them care and friendship this Christmas.

Challenge us to share what we have with others and to love others as you do.

Amen