

key stage 2 history drama script

'That was your life' drama

This drama is based on an old TV show called 'This is your life', in which the presenter surprised famous people with the phrase '(name), this is your life!' The person would then be taken to a TV studio, where their family, friends and old acquaintances would be waiting. The show was all about the person's life and what they had achieved. In this drama the leader plays the part of the presenter and the pupils play some of the characters involved in the story of William Booth.

props

- 'Clap' card and character cards (see below)
- Bell or similar for questions
- Props/costumes for characters (see below)

Extra props (optional)

- Theme music (available to download from www.whirligig-tv.co.uk)
- 'That was your life' red book or folder (to hold the script)
- Backdrop, scenery, props for TV studio etc
- PowerPoint show (download from USB) – see script

characters

- 'Clap' card holder (optional)
- William Booth – top hat and old Bible
- Catherine Booth – shawl and/or old Salvation Army bonnet and tunic
- Bramwell Booth – old Salvation Army cap and old tunic
- Farthing breakfast girl – Victorian bonnet, shawl and mug
- Customer at the pawnbroker's shop – Victorian cap and money bag
- Audience – any extra pupils/helpers (optional)

set the scene

Before the drama begins seat Catherine, Bramwell, the customer and farthing breakfast child in a row, as if they are awaiting the arrival of William Booth in the 'That Was Your Life' studio. Have a chair ready for William Booth. If you have extra pupils they become the studio audience and the clap card holder (if you have one) should be standing where everyone can see him/her. William Booth begins by standing away from the seated characters, preaching outside The Blind Beggar pub.

script

Presenter: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to 'That was your life'.
(PP slide 1. Play music. Hold up 'CLAP' card. Audience and studio guests clap.)

Now today we're going to surprise a very important figure in history. This person was last seen standing close to a popular pub in the East End of London. I've been warned that it's a rather rough area. The name of the pub is 'The Blind Beggar' – so let's go and see if we can find him. *(approaches William Booth)*

Ahh, I do believe I can see the man himself. Let's go and surprise him.

Hello – if I could just disturb you for a moment. Tonight, William Booth – that was your life! *(William Booth acts surprised and is then taken to the studio and seated with guests. Encourage characters to get into the role and greet Booth as he enters the studio)*

(PP slide 2) Well, it all started in a small house in Sneinton, Nottingham, where you were born on 10th April, 1829. As you know, when you were born there were no postage stamps, no radios, not even trains. Life was very difficult and there was a lot of poverty.

As a young man you became a pawnbroker. *(PP slide 3)*
Here is one of the people you met at that time.
(Hold up 'CLAP' card.)

**customer of
the
pawnbroker's
shop:**

(Child to read from card.)

Hello, Booth. Remember me? I used to visit the pawnbroker's shop where you used to work. There were a lot of expensive objects in your shop. Once I had to exchange my wife's wedding ring in your shop so that we had money for food. You never seemed very happy to be working there. I wonder why?

Ring bell: Question Time

What was a pawnbroker's shop? How did it work?

Do you think Booth enjoyed working in a pawnbroker's shop? Why/why not?

Presenter: As a pawnbroker, you met so many people who were living in poverty and you always wished you could do more to help them. Now, at the age of 14 you became a Christian and promised to follow God. Then, almost ten years later, in 1852, you joined the Methodist Church and became a preacher. It was at this time that you met a rather remarkable lady, Catherine Mumford. This special woman became your wife. *(PP slide 4)* Let's meet her now. *(Hold up 'CLAP' card.)*

Catherine: *(Child to read from card.)*

We lived a very happy life together. We had eight lovely children and worked hard to help the poor and needy and to tell others about God's love. Sometimes life was hard because we didn't have much money and you travelled so much, but we always obeyed God and he used us to make a difference in the world. I became known as the 'Army Mother'.

Ring bell: Question Time

Why did Catherine become known as the 'Army Mother'?

Catherine became a preacher like her husband. What does a preacher do? Why might she have been nervous to preach in Victorian times? (*Women weren't usually allowed to preach in church and so it was a shock to see her in the pulpit.*)

Do you think a woman preacher would be just as good as a man? Why/why not?

Presenter: William, you left the Methodist Church and formed your own mission in 1865 - you changed its name to 'The Salvation Army' in 1878. (*PP slide 5*) Many people joined your new organisation and you became the General of The Salvation Army. You really wanted to help people in need, especially people who were often forgotten by others.

General, what did you do to help the poor and needy as leader of The Salvation Army?

Ring bell: Question Time

What would you do to help the poor and needy today?

What do you think General Booth did to help the poor and needy?

William Booth: (*Child to read from card.*)

Well, I wanted to make life better for the poor. While I was preaching, I saw people in the streets who needed food, drink, clothing and a job. The Salvation Army tried to give them these things. We were following the teaching of Jesus.

Presenter: Yes, your Christian beliefs were very important to you! One of the things you did was to provide 'Farthing Breakfasts'. (*PP slide 6*) Children would queue up for a hearty breakfast to start the day. Let's meet one of the children you helped. (*Hold up 'CLAP' card.*)

Farthing breakfast child: (*Child to read from card.*)

My family never had no money, so we were always hungry at school. When The Salvation Army started the farthing breakfasts the poor children could afford to buy breakfast before school. We had to take our own mugs, and we got tea and enough jam and bread to fill us up. We were so grateful.

Presenter: You also helped the girls who worked in the match factories, making matches. You saw how unfairly they were treated, working in terrible and dangerous conditions and so you opened up your own match factory which was clean and safe to work in. Many of the girls came to work at your factory. Your matches were called 'Lights in Darkest England'. (*PP slide 7*)

Ring bell: Question Time

Why do you think the matches were called 'Lights in Darkest England'?

What do you think happened to the other match factories? (*They had to make their factories safe and treat their workers fairly, otherwise they would be shut down or go out of business.*)

The Salvation Army also provided beds for people who had nowhere to sleep at night. *(PP slide 8)*

One day, in June 1865, you were walking along a street in a poor part of London. You saw bundles of old clothes in the street. Then you saw those bundles moving. It was then you realised that the bundles of clothes were actually people who were living rough. The next day you spoke to your son, Bramwell. Bramwell, thank you for joining us. *(Hold up 'CLAP' card.)* Tell us about that day.

**Bramwell
Booth:**

(Child to read from card.)

I remember it clearly. When you saw all those homeless people you said to me, 'Go and do something'. I found an old tram shed and made it into a hostel where men could sleep and have shelter. The old tram shed remained a hostel for men for many years.

Presenter:

What great work you have achieved, with the help of Catherine, your children and all the other members of The Salvation Army. Now the work of The Salvation Army has spread to many different countries.

Even today members of The Salvation Army are inspired by the words of William Booth's last public speech. William, what were those words? *(PP slide 9)*

William Booth:

While women weep as they do now, I'll fight;
while little children go hungry as they do now, I'll fight;
while men go to prison, in and out, in and out, I'll fight;
while there is a drunkard left,
while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets,
while there remains one dark soul without the light of God,
I'll fight;
I'll fight to the very end!

Ring bell: Question Time

Which word does William Booth repeat at the end of each line in his final speech?

Was William Booth physically fighting, like a boxer?

What was Booth fighting against? How did he fight?

Why did William Booth call his organisation The Salvation Army?

Character cards

William Booth

1.

Well, I wanted to make life better for the poor. While I was preaching, I saw people in the streets who needed food, drink, clothing and a job. The Salvation Army tried to give them these things. We were following the teaching of Jesus.

2.

While women weep as they do now, I'll fight;
while little children go hungry as they do now, I'll fight;
while men go to prison, in and out, in and out, I'll fight;
while there is a drunkard left,
while there is a poor lost girl upon the streets,
while there remains one dark soul without the light of God,
I'll fight;
I'll fight to the very end!

Bramwell Booth

I remember it clearly. When you saw all those homeless people you said to me, 'Go and do something'. I found an old tram shed and made it into a hostel where men could sleep and have shelter. The old tram shed remained a hostel for men for many years.

Catherine Booth

We lived a very happy life together. We had eight lovely children and worked hard to help the poor and needy and to tell others about God's love. Sometimes life was hard because we didn't have much money and you travelled so much, but we always obeyed God and he used us to make a difference in the world. I became known as the 'Army Mother'.

customer at the pawnbroker's shop

Hello, Booth. Remember me? I used to visit the pawnbroker's shop where you used to work. There were a lot of expensive objects in your shop. Once I had to exchange my wife's wedding ring in your shop so that we had money for food. But you never seemed very happy to be working there. I wonder why?

Farthing breakfast child

My family never had no money, so we were always hungry at school. When The Salvation Army started the Farthing breakfasts the poor children could afford to buy breakfast before school. We had to take our own mugs, and we got tea and enough jam and bread to fill us up. We were so grateful.

CLAR