



# Catherine Booth

Founder of **The Salvation Army**

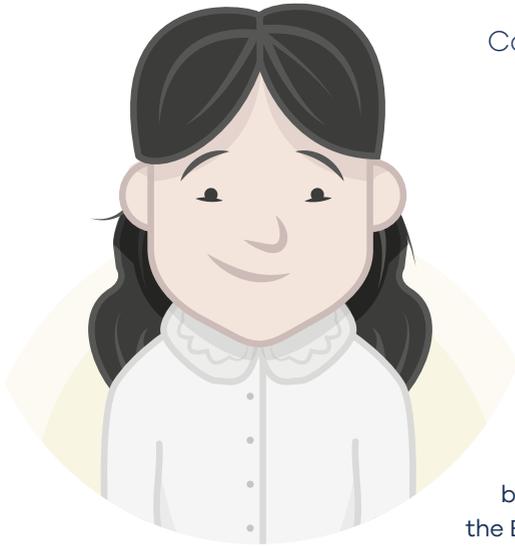
**If we are to  
better the  
future, we  
must disturb  
the present.**



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## A Victorian Girl

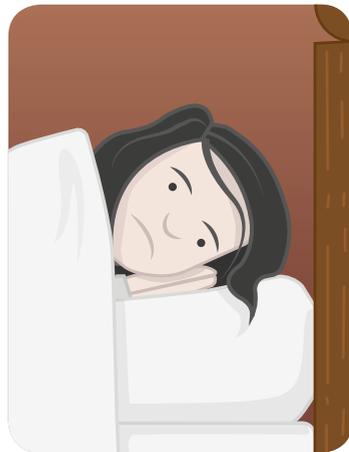


Catherine Mumford was born in 1829 in Derbyshire.

Catherine might have led an easy and comfortable life. Instead she chose to spend her life trying to help others.

Girls during the Victorian times were taught how to manage a house and family. But Catherine wanted to learn more than this. She began to read when she was three and the book that interested her most was the Bible. By the age of 12, Catherine had read the Bible eight times!

Sometimes life was difficult for Catherine. She was often very ill. When she was 14 she had severe back pain. The doctor told Catherine the best cure was to spend a year lying down – mostly face down. As she could not go to school, she spent her time studying. Catherine loved discussing the things she learned. When she returned to school, her classmates did not understand why Catherine would want to try so hard. Surely a woman did not need to be so well educated?



## A Girl of Action

Catherine began to see how unfair the world around her was and she started to want to change things. She saw how badly people and animals were being treated.

Once she saw a coal merchant in the street beating a donkey for being slow. She stepped in and said that the donkey was carrying too much, and hitting it would not help.

When she learned that workers on sugar farms in the Caribbean were treated very poorly and paid very little, she decided to protest. She stopped eating food made with sugar, and told lots of people about it. They decided to protest too and stopped eating sugar.

On another time she saw a man who was very drunk being arrested, and a crowd had gathered to watch and laugh. Catherine ignored everyone and went up to the man. She introduced herself as a friend and helped lead him to the police station.



### Surprising Catherine

Catherine did not behave like a typical Victorian girl. What surprised you the most?

## A Young Lady of Faith



After a lot of thought, Catherine decided she wanted to commit to being a Christian.

When the Mumfords moved to London, she became an active member of the church.

Catherine's faith was very important to her. She threw herself into projects for the church and ran a Sunday school for girls. She continued studying the Bible and loved sharing discussions about what it said. She knew she wanted her faith to be an important part of her life.

One Sunday a guest preacher arrived at her church. He was called William Booth. He spoke with such passion that Catherine was very impressed by him. Afterwards, at an afternoon tea party, they were introduced to each other.

Catherine and William started chatting – mostly about faith and the Bible. William was very impressed by this little lady with big ideas. She challenged him, she helped him to discover new ways of thinking about faith, and she encouraged William to study to become a minister.

They soon fell in love and decided to marry. But first William had to complete his training to be a minister. They spent three years apart but wrote many letters to each other of their plans for the future. Finally, in 1855, they married.

## A Busy Young Mum

Married life was hard at first. William was often away travelling and campaigning, speaking at meetings all over the country. They soon had a young family but had no permanent home to raise their children in. Despite the hardship, they loved it.

Catherine wanted to be a good mother, but she also wanted to support William in his work. The children were mostly taught at home. But sometimes Catherine had to leave the children with her parents so she could travel with William.

While William spoke at large meetings with thousands of people, Catherine spoke to individuals or led smaller meetings for women. Catherine was shy but she wanted people to know of God's love for them.

Life was tricky but it felt like they were doing the work they were meant to do.



### Busy Catherine

Catherine was busy helping with the church, looking after their family and helping William campaign.

**Why do you think Catherine was so busy?**

## A New Home



Finally, William was given a place to stay and work.

It was great that there was a new home for all their growing family, but they missed campaigning.

Staying in one place gave new challenges for Catherine. Every day she saw how people were struggling to live. She saw the poverty and slums people lived in. She saw the conditions and long hours children worked in the factories.

She started to campaign to change the law about children working.

She visited people in the poorest areas to hear about their troubles, and helped where she could – such as doing the housework for a woman who had just had twins. Catherine wrote leaflets about women and faith. She carried a notebook with her so she could write down ideas while she cleaned the house!

She gave small talks about poverty and Christianity. Catherine was finding her voice.

## Can I have a word?

Catherine's ideas were firm but so far she had only shared them with William and in her writing. One day, while Catherine was listening to William preach to an audience of three thousand people, she suddenly felt moved to speak. She went up to William and asked if she could 'have a word'. William and Catherine had often talked about women preaching, but no woman had done it yet.

Much to the surprise of everyone, Catherine started to preach. Everyone was impressed at how eloquent and insightful this quiet, softly spoken woman was. Catherine spoke at the next meeting, and at many more. When William became ill, Catherine took over his duties. Everyone was amazed at how talented this *woman preacher* was.

After three years, William and Catherine began to feel it was time to travel and preach again. However the church wanted them to stay where they were. So they made the difficult decision to leave the church and travel by themselves. They had no income and four children, but they felt they could do more good elsewhere. They preached wherever they could – including theatre halls and circus tents!

Soon Catherine became a very popular preacher. She was asked to attend large meetings, where she could share her ideas – how we can show God's love by helping those who are less fortunate. The people who listened to her were often very wealthy. She made them think about how they were sharing that wealth, and if they were earning that money in a fair way or by exploiting others.



### Catherine speaks out

Catherine started to speak out about things that were unfair.

**What would you want to speak out about?**

## East End of London

In 1865 William and Catherine returned to London.

William started work for a mission in the East End of London – *The Christian Mission*. A lot of poor people lived there and many had never been to church or knew about Jesus. It soon became clear that people weren't ready to listen about God if they were hungry and needed shelter. Helping people had to come first.

The Booths were now a family with eight children and Catherine was kept busy. She was teaching her children, writing, and preaching. She spoke of the work William was doing, of how he was helping to improve people's lives. People were inspired by what she said; people donated money to support the work, and some even wanted to join the mission and help.

Even though Catherine still suffered from ill health, she supported William with his workload. When William became ill, she proved more than capable of leading the whole mission by herself. William and Catherine were a strong team.



## The Salvation Army

William and Catherine worked tirelessly together and the mission grew and grew. Eventually the mission changed its name to *The Salvation Army*. Catherine continued to write. She received many letters from people wanting advice and support and replied to each.

Catherine continued to campaign for people to be treated fairly. One campaign which hit the headlines was about young girls being sold by their parents. It shocked Victorian society, and eventually the law was changed to protect them.

Salvationists often liked to march to meetings. One group of Salvationists requested a banner they could march behind. So Catherine designed the Salvation Army flag. Unfortunately not everyone agreed with the work of The Salvation Army. When there was a march, they would throw things and hurt people. Catherine designed a bonnet for the women to wear, which would protect their faces from objects.

Catherine became known as *the Army Mother* because of the way she cared for, guided and supported people.



### Caring Catherine

Catherine cared for lots of people who needed help.

**Why do you think she cared?**

## A New Church



Catherine helped to start a new Christian church – The Salvation Army.

This church used a lot of Catherine’s ideas. Men and women were treated equally, and all were encouraged to preach and to lead. Salvationists promised not to drink, as alcohol was causing a lot of problems in society. The church put a focus on accepting Jesus in your heart and showing this by helping others. It left out a lot of the signs and symbols used in other churches.



By the time Catherine was 60, The Salvation Army had spread to other countries in the world. William had a great new plan on how to help people. He started to write a book called *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. Unfortunately Catherine became too ill to support him. Surrounded by her family, she died in 1890. William was devastated.

But with the support of his family and friends, he continued to lead The Salvation Army, guided by Catherine’s ideals.

## Catherine’s Impact

Catherine Booth’s influence is still present today.

*The Army Mother* showed that women were more than capable of leading and preaching. The Salvation Army has always had women officers and has had women Generals. Other churches have also embraced women as religious leaders. Today, women in society are viewed as being just as capable as men.

Catherine wanted to help others in need. This has led to The Salvation Army doing thousands of charitable projects all around the world. Campaigning and protesting to raise awareness of social injustice is still needed today.

Best of all, many thousands of people have been introduced to Jesus through the Army that William and Catherine started.

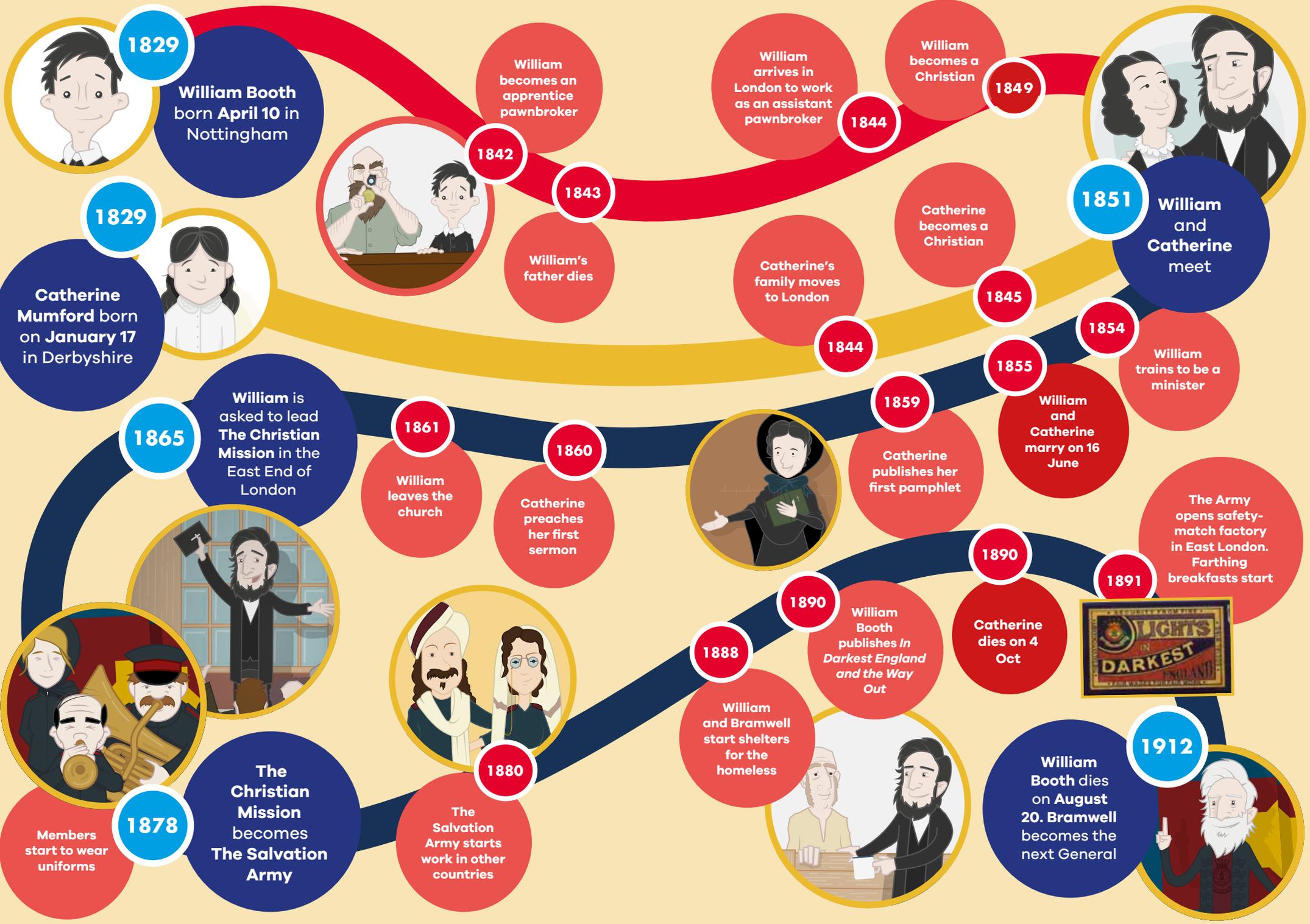


### Inspiring Catherine

What do you think was Catherine’s most important achievement?

What would Catherine do today?

How could we help?



1829

**William Booth**  
born April 10 in  
Nottingham



1842



William  
becomes an  
apprentice  
pawnbroker

1843

William's  
father dies

1844

William  
arrives in  
London to work  
as an assistant  
pawnbroker

1849

William  
becomes a  
Christian

1851



**William  
and  
Catherine  
meet**

1845

Catherine  
becomes a  
Christian

1844

Catherine's  
family moves  
to London

1854

William  
trains to be a  
minister

1855

William  
and  
Catherine  
marry on 16  
June

1859

Catherine  
publishes her  
first pamphlet



1860

Catherine  
preaches  
her first  
sermon

1861

William  
leaves the  
church

1865

William is  
asked to lead  
**The Christian  
Mission** in the  
East End of  
London



1890

Catherine  
dies on 4  
Oct

1891

The Army  
opens safety-  
match factory  
in East London.  
Farthing  
breakfasts start



1888

William  
and Bramwell  
start shelters  
for the  
homeless



1880



The  
Salvation  
Army starts  
work in other  
countries

1878

**The  
Christian  
Mission  
becomes  
The Salvation  
Army**



Members  
start to wear  
uniforms