

HOLE IN MY LIFE

Homelessness and The Salvation Army

Primary assembly or talk



Aims

- To think about how it may feel to be homeless and have something missing in your life.
- To find out how The Salvation Army helps people who have become homeless.

Resources & preparation

- Download the HOLE IN MY LIFE Primary Assembly PowerPoint show from www.salvationarmy.org.uk/schoolsministry
- You'll need a few items with holes in – eg, sock, shoe, balloon, small jigsaw with one missing piece – set out on a table at the front of the hall or classroom.
- Find out if pupils have done any previous work on homelessness or The Salvation Army to make sure you are adding to their learning.

About this resource

This resource is designed to help you deliver an assembly or talk to encourage Key Stage 2/Primary 3-7 pupils to begin to think more about homelessness and to learn about how The Salvation Army helps people who are homeless. For a whole lesson, or for follow-up work, check out the HOLE IN MY LIFE lesson resources.

Ideal for
Key Stage 2
RE &
Citizenship

Assembly overview

- Introduction (2-5 minutes)
- There's a hole in my... (5 minutes)
- Homelessness (5 minutes)
- Helping the homeless (5-7 minutes)
- Reflection and prayer (3-5 minutes)

The suggested timings are given as a guide, but you may find it helpful to have a run-through beforehand, remembering that interaction with the pupils, their responses and any questions they may have will add extra time. Find out from the school exactly how much time they would like you to speak for and adapt this resource as necessary.

1. Introduction

If pupils haven't done any previous work on The Salvation Army, begin with a short introduction explaining what The Salvation Army is and does. First, ask the pupils what they already know about The Salvation Army (PP slide 2). Then show the 'What is The Salvation Army?' image (PP slide 3). Ask the children what they think the whole picture shows about The Salvation Army. Read the statements below and ask pupils (if time allows) which objects could illustrate each statement.

The Salvation Army...

- is a **Christian church** and a **charity**.
- uses **music** to worship in its churches and plays music in the streets, especially at Christmas.
- **cares for children, families and young people** in its churches, community centres and homes.
- **supports older people** by providing meals, friendship clubs, home visits and homes.
- has a **newspaper** which helps people think about life, faith and the world, and also helps to raise money for its work.
- **helps to find people who are missing** and reunites them with their families.
- **helps in emergencies** like fires and floods by providing drinks, food and comfort for emergency workers and people who are distressed or hurt.
- **works in more than 120 countries** around the world.

If pupils are already familiar with The Salvation Army, simply ask for five things they know about The Salvation Army – one fact each from five pupils. Add any important facts they may have missed.

2. There's a hole in my...

Show the children a few things with a hole in them, or with something missing (eg, a balloon, a sock, a shoe, a small jigsaw with a piece missing, etc). Display them on a table at the front of the hall and ask for one or two volunteers to investigate the items and say what they notice about them, or what they have in common. It shouldn't take long for them to see that all the items have a hole in them (PP slide 4). Ask the children if it matters that these things have holes in them? Why?

Explain Today I want to talk to you about another type of hole – a hole that people can get in their life (PP slide 5). I wonder what it means to have a hole in your life.

There are certain things we *need* to have a happy and healthy life (ask the children for ideas). Food, warmth, a safe place to live, love and care, good relationships with our family and friends and something to get out of bed for – a purpose. When one of these important things is missing, or goes wrong somehow, it can feel like life has a hole in it.



HOLE IN MY LIFE
Primary assembly or talk

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/schools

3. About homelessness

Explain Today we're thinking about homelessness. What is homelessness? What do you think is missing from a homeless person's life? The Salvation Army has been trying to help homeless people for a really long time, more than 100 years. We know that giving someone who doesn't have a place to live a roof over their head is really helpful, but often it doesn't solve their problems. It doesn't take away the hole.

People become homeless for many different reasons (PP slide 6). Sometimes a relationship within their family breaks down, sometimes a person loses their job and just can't afford to pay for their house. Sometimes they become addicted to something harmful like alcohol or drugs. It is important to remember that these problems don't always lead to a person becoming homeless, but sometimes they do, especially if people feel they have no one at all to turn to for help.

When people become homeless sometimes they can find a place to sleep, maybe going from one friend's sofa to another friend's sofa or staying in a bed and breakfast for a while. Other people who are homeless end up sleeping and living on the streets because they have nowhere else to go (PP slide 7). It can be hard to imagine what it's like to have no home at all. Look at the picture on the screen. What do you think it feels like to be homeless? (PP slide 8)

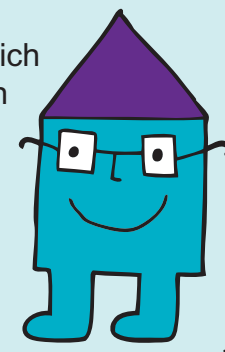
Imagine feeling a mixture of these feelings every day, and thinking about the problems which made you homeless in the first place too. Can you understand how people who are homeless often feel like they have a big hole in their life, one that can't be filled just by getting a roof over their head?

Questions about homelessness

Homelessness is a very complicated issue and children often have lots of questions and thoughts about homelessness. Before the assembly, spend some time thinking about the following questions and how you would answer them for primary school pupils.

- Aren't homeless people scary?
- Can homeless people harm you?
- How do homeless people know how to get help?
- Why do some homeless people have mobile phones?
- Should you give money to homeless people?
- What can we do to help homeless people?

How can you help to challenge the traditional or stereotypical image which many children and adults have when they think of homeless people? How can you help pupils to empathise with homeless people and have a better understanding of homelessness? Do you have any real-life stories you can use?



HOLE IN MY LIFE
Primary assembly or talk

4. Helping the homeless

Explain The Salvation Army has always been known for helping people who are poor, homeless or forgotten. Because we are a Christian church and charity, our work comes from our beliefs. Jesus cared for the people who were seen as unimportant and forgotten by others and we believe God wants us to do the same.

So how does The Salvation Army try to help homeless people fill the hole in their lives and find a home?

PP slide 9. We have centres all over the United Kingdom and Ireland. There are drop-in centres where homeless people can come and get a hot drink and food, a listening ear and a friendly welcome, and advice and help. In some cities The Salvation Army also has street teams which go out at night and talk to homeless people and let them know they can come to The Salvation Army for help.

PP slide 10. The Salvation Army also has 70 special centres for homeless people called Lifehouses where homeless people can stay. They don't just provide a roof over people's heads, they help people get their life back.

PP slide 11. There are friendly and caring staff to listen to and decide the best way to help each person. They help people deal with problems, like or anger or how to have good relationships with people..

PP slide 12. Everyone gets their own room so they have their own space and start to feel like a real person again.

PP slide 13. Lifehouses help people learn new skills and get qualifications so they can get a job or go back to college.

PP slide 14. There are projects where homeless people can help others in the community, which makes them feel much better about themselves.

PP slide 15. This might surprise you but there are also lots of fun activities in Lifehouses, such as sport, music and outings, because having fun helps people feel happier and build friendships.

PP slide 16 & 17. There are special centres for homeless families and children too. In fact, every centre makes the people who stay there feel like they are part of a family.

PP slide 18. Of course The Salvation Army always aims to help people move on into a place of their own. Sometimes this happens after a few months or a year. Sometimes it takes much longer.

PP slide 19. So Lifehouses help people who stay there to find out what is missing in their life and learn how they can make themselves feel complete and whole again.

Questions

If possible, include some time for the children to ask questions about homelessness or your work.

4



HOLE IN MY LIFE
Primary assembly or talk

www.salvationarmy.org.uk/schools

Reflection

Explain As Christians, we believe that the Bible tells us about God's dream for the world and that God sent Jesus to earth to help to make that dream come true (PP slide 20). Jesus once said: 'I have come so [everyone] can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way' (John 10:10 *NIRV*). Jesus didn't want anyone to feel like they had a hole in their life. Through his words and actions he loved and cared for people who were lonely, sad, poor, forgotten or who felt left out. He asked his followers to do the same and that's why The Salvation Army wants to help homeless people have the fullest, best life they can. Let's be quiet and think about these questions (PP slide 21):

- I wonder if you have ever felt like you had a hole in your life.
- I wonder how you could say thank you for your home, your family, your friends and your school.
- I wonder how you could help others who are lonely, sad, poor or left out.
(Pause between each wondering statement to allow pupils time to reflect.)

Prayer*

Dear God

Thank you for all the good things in life, for family and for friends, for a warm bed and enough food to eat, for a home to feel safe in, a place to go at the end of each day.

Help us not to forget the people in our world and in our community who don't have all the things they need to live a full and happy life. Show us ways we can care for them and ways we can help others to care for them too. Amen.

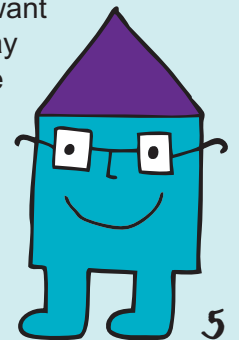
*Use if appropriate, eg, in church schools. Ask a teacher if you're unsure.

Adapting the PowerPoint

The PowerPoint show is ready to use and fits with the assembly outline above. However, if you do need to make changes use the following steps.

- Right click on the presentation with your mouse and select 'Save As' to save the PowerPoint show as a PowerPoint presentation.
- To change the photos and include images which show your own local work, double click on the image or select *Format Autoshape*. On the *Colour and Lines* tab, under *Fill*, select *Fill Effects*, then *Select Picture*. Choose a picture from your files. Ensure the *lock picture aspect ratio* option is ticked on the *Fill Effects/Picture* tab, to ensure your image doesn't become distorted.
- **The illustrations and characters are for use within this resource only.** If you do want to use the illustrations in a different way outside of this PowerPoint then please contact the Schools & Colleges Unit for advice.

Schools & Colleges Unit
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