

The First World War

PRIMARY ASSEMBLY

Additional Resources

PowerPoint presentation

A pillow, a brown paper parcel, fundraising tin, a dinner plate, 2 cups and 2 saucers, a doughnut, writing paper and an envelope, a small chocolate bar, a flower, a musical instrument, a Bible.

Hut chant

Mini doughnuts or pieces of a doughnut, one per child - if appropriate

Aims

To learn how The Salvation Army gave support during WW1.

To reflect on how we can show love to our neighbour today.

At some point during the assembly, if appropriate, you may wish to highlight that General Bramwell Booth left it to the individual whether to fight or not. But all were expected to help serve their fellow man in any capacity they could. If you were too old or young to enlist, Salvationists could still help. If you were enlisted, you could visit the wounded, guide by example or become an unofficial chaplain.

Introduction

Welcome children and teachers to assembly and introduce yourself

Today I'm here to explain to you some of the things that The Salvation Army did to support people during WW1. What do you know about WW1 already? *Take a few answers and establish that it was a war that lasted more than four years and involved lots of people from around the world.* What do you know about The Salvation Army? *Take a few answers and establish that it is a Christian church and charity.*

WW1 started 100 years ago, before we had TV and computers. The Salvation Army tried to support people to help them through the war. You're going to be a time detective to figure out what kind of help we gave 100 years ago.

Main Talk

I may need some helpers to hold up some objects. *For each object ask a child to hold it for you, and ask the children, 'I wonder what kind of help this represents?'*

A Pillow

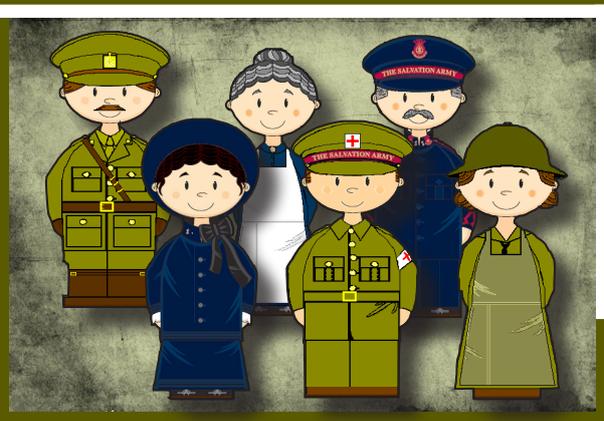
We use a pillow for sleeping. In the UK The Salvation Army set up homes and hostels for soldiers and sailors so they could always find a safe place to sleep at night.

Hundreds of soldiers would be travelling around the UK, trying to get to their camps or trying to return home on leave. Many soldiers got lost in large cities or missed their trains or didn't know where they could stay. So The Salvation Army set up train station patrols to help lost soldiers, and set up homes and hostels so soldiers



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and sailors could always find a safe place to stay. Some of the homes even had places for families to stay and visit! And some got very busy with the number of soldiers needing a safe place to stay!

Can you spot how the soldiers were made to feel welcomed? *Tablecloth, flowers, families visiting, reading area...*

A Brown Paper Parcel

How exciting to receive a parcel! Doesn't it cheer you up? Lots of parcels and letters were sent to soldiers. The parcels would help cheer up the soldiers and have little treats inside like chocolates or even socks! Sewing groups made clothes to send to the soldiers.

A Collecting Tin - *100 years ago tins would look different and flag pins were often sold*

There was a lot of fundraising done by The Salvation Army. At the beginning of the war all the ambulances were actually simply carts pulled by horses. The Salvation Army bought the first motorised ambulances for the war and then raised funds to buy more.

A Dinner Plate

People in the UK needed help getting food. Food was becoming scarce and some people found it harder to find the time to prepare food because of the long hours they worked making equipment for soldiers. So The Salvation Army set up public food kitchens to help feed families. The kitchens came in handy whenever there was an explosion, maybe from an airship attack, and emergency aid was needed.

A Cup and Saucer - *this is how most people drank tea 100 years ago*

Hundreds of homes were visited every week. Over a cup of tea it was a chance for a chat to see how families were coping without their son, father or brother. It was a chance to see if they needed any help. They could also let the soldiers know that someone had been to their home and checked that their families were all right.

How do you think the soldiers felt about all the ways they were being helped by people in the UK?

Soldiers were sent to war and it was a really horrible situation to be in. So The Salvation Army went with them to continue to help.

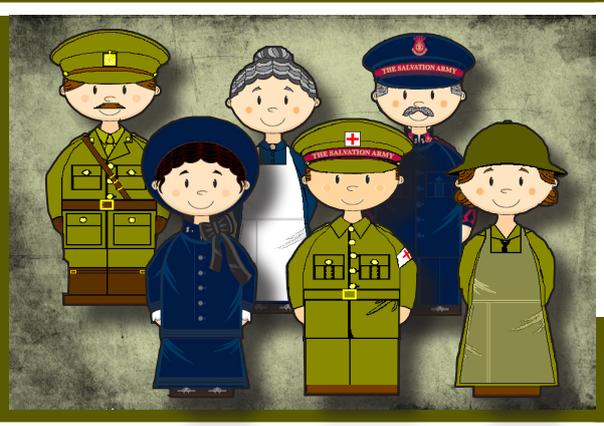
A Cup and Saucer - *just like you would have been given at home!*

When soldiers were in camps, either in the UK or abroad, they could meet The Salvation Army in a hut! These huts were places for soldiers to go and relax in their free time. It was a place to read a book, or write a letter home. A place to play a game, or you could have a cup of tea and some cake or some hot food. The huts were a place where everyone was made to feel welcome.

Go to a group of children and greet everyone in the line with a smile and a greeting - 'How are you?' 'How's your cold?' 'How's the wife?'

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How did that make you feel? Special? Happier? It was important to treat each soldier as special and important and to make the huts a safe place. Just as your classrooms are bright and welcoming and clean, the huts were too. There was often a meeting held there, a bit of a sing-song and a bit of a talk to help give soldiers hope.

A Doughnut

When the soldiers moved to the front, closer to the fighting, Salvationists went as close as they could to help them too. Field kitchens were set up close to the trenches and were often run by women. One day they were running out of supplies and so they came up with the idea of making doughnuts, so these women became known as doughnut lassies! Imagine the smell - hot and sweet! It helped the soldiers forget that they were at war.

Writing Paper, Envelope and a Small Chocolate Bar

Women did other work with the troops too. Women visited soldiers in hospital to cheer them up, to give little gifts and to help them keep in contact with their loved ones by helping to write their letters.

A Flower

Women also helped look after the graves of soldiers and would write to their families about where they had been buried. They would send some of the flowers that had been put on the grave site, so the families could have a keepsake.

A Musical Instrument - *ambulances were run under the direction of The Red Cross*

Do you recall I mentioned the ambulances? The Salvation Army also sent men with the ambulances, and they were ambulance drivers. Their job was to get men who had been wounded to a hospital. Quite a lot of the men who drove ambulances were also bandmen. They played an instrument. So when they had any spare time they would play music to cheer the men up.

A Bible

A chaplain is a religious man who goes with the soldiers and his job is to pray with the men, to hold religious meetings, and to bury the dead. Salvation Army chaplains also tried to support them in other ways. They tried to cheer soldiers up with songs and little treats like chocolate and oranges. But they would help out any practical way they could - for example, cutting steps in the mud or peeling potatoes!

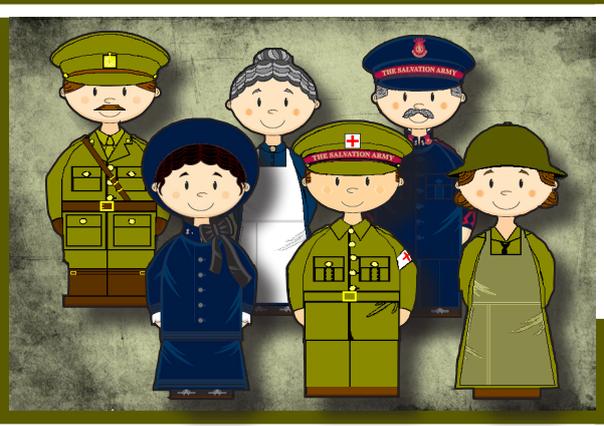
Cup Your Ear

The Salvation Army tried to help soldiers and sailors in many ways: field kitchens and doughnuts, huts, help in the UK, hospital and graveside visits, chaplains, ambulances and bandmen. There was lots of practical help being given - but there was also a different type of help being offered. When you're upset or have worries, you can talk to your teachers or a friend or an adult you trust. They will listen to you. If a soldier was getting worried or was upset or was having trouble making sense of it all, they could talk to any member of The Salvation Army and they would listen and try to help.



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Which do you think was the most enjoyable type of support?

Which do you think was the most important?

Christian Perspective

Jesus taught people to **'Love your neighbour'** (Matthew 19:19) and The Salvation Army tried to do this during a time of war.

Optional - if appropriate

But during wartime who is your neighbour? The Salvation Army is also at work in Germany, where it is known as Die Heilsarmee. In WW1 Die Heilsarmee was also trying to support people with public kitchens and helping the troops.

There are a lot of stories of German and British Christian soldiers helping each other, showing love to each other despite being at war. And sometimes they found out that the person they were giving water to was also a member of The Salvation Army, just from a different country.

Challenge and Reflection

The Salvation Army saw that people needed help during wartime and tried to help. When do we see someone needing help today - in the classroom, in the playground, at home? Do we help them? How can we show love to others, in our lives today?

Pause for short reflection time.

We are going to finish the assembly with a little chant based on being in a Salvation Army hut. *Read the chant with rhythm and ask the children to say the repetitive second line - And give them a cup of tea.*

As you leave the hall, please take a (piece of) doughnut. Before you take a bite, take a moment to smell it and see how all the sugary sweetness makes you feel. Remember, something as simple as a doughnut made a lot of tired and weary soldiers very happy. What can you do to make someone happy today?

Thank children and staff for letting you be a part of their assembly today.