
Harvest Assembly

Friends of Cathedral Relief Service, UK



Introduction

This assembly uses the GERS structure followed in many schools (Gathering, Engagement, Responding, Sending) and explores the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand found in the Bible in John 6 verses 1-12 (appendix 1).



Key Idea Explored

In a world of huge need, we can often see feeding others as just solving a problem. But Christians believe what we are doing in responding to poverty and need is far more than problem solving. It is about participating in God's new creation/being part of God's work in bringing about life being lived as originally intended, where everyone can be fed and have fullness of life. Just like the young boy in the story, it is about participating in God's work by offering what we can (however small) rather than trying to fix the situation in our own strength. This story challenges us to think about what God could do with what we offer. Do we have a part to play in making the world a better place for everyone?

You will need

*Items to make a packed lunch - knife, lunch box, bread, butter, sandwich filling, fruit, biscuit etc.

*Two members of staff (S1 and S2) to enact the scenario. Please note that the scenario only has concern shown that others don't have any lunch; they do not offer to share theirs.

*You could have 5 pupils previously prepared to read out the passage from John 6:1-12 (narrator, Jesus, Philip, Andrew and boy)

GATHERING

As pupils arrive for assembly S1 is making sandwiches and getting a packed lunch ready for S2 who is clearly very excited and has a rucksack ready to put the lunch in.

ENGAGEMENT

Once all the pupils are in the room S1 has a quick chat with S2 about why they need a lunch - they are going on a big outing to see a celebrity. They are very excited and wonder what the day will be like - lots of people, noise, flags... S1 soon waves off S2 who then leaves the room for a couple of minutes. Whilst they are out of the room S1 tells the pupils they are to pretend they are now part of the crowd at the big event but none of them have any food with them.

S2 returns to the room and sits amongst the pupils asking those close by if they are excited? Did they sleep last night? Have they got their packed lunch with them? As it becomes clear that S2 is the only one with any lunch with them the staff around the room/S1 begin to get worried - it's going to cost a fortune to feed everyone, everyone will have to be sent home and they'll miss meeting the celebrity... Do the maths!!! - one lunch but many people what can be done? (all the while S2 holds onto their lunch very tightly with no suggestion of sharing it and they stay sitting with the pupils until the Response section).

Ask the group of pupils to read the Bible story. Then ask all the pupils what things are the same in the story and S2's outing? (going to a big event to see and hear a celebrity, lots of excitement, real concern that people have not brought food or drink with them...) And what things are different? (no-one has offered to share their lunch, the celebrity is not able make use of what has been offered as no-one has offered to help and the food hasn't miraculously become enough).

People are hungry all over the world and many children go to school hungry without any lunch. One such place is Kolkata where there are many areas of real poverty and hungry people. It's a huge problem but people are working there to

offer the help that they can. They can't do it on their own. The Cathedral Relief Service, or CRS for short, is one such group of people. They provide schools for children with no money to go to, and they offer food to help the pupils grow up healthy. You could show the photo in Appendix 2. I wonder what we could do to help them and be like the little boy in the story? How might it help us to remember that just like the little boy we don't have to solve the whole problem but just have to offer what we can? I wonder how we could help CRS?

Christians believe that God can use whatever they are able to give to make a big difference. In the story we listened to we learnt that Jesus chooses to work with others to make the world a better place - just like using the boy's picnic lunch. No one person here is able to solve the world's problems. We are simply being asked to do whatever we can and to trust God to use it in ways that we don't understand to have a big impact. Christians believe they are being asked to be part of God's way of doing things.

RESPONDING

S2 now leads the response by moving to the front of the room where they reflect that it would have been a good idea to have shared their lunch. They also refer back to the Bible story and ask if anyone noticed how many baskets of bread and fish were collected at the end after everyone had had enough to eat? Nothing was wasted - not the boy's generosity nor any of the food that was left over. Christians believe that nothing and no one is lost or unimportant. Even though we may feel small and insignificant compared to the huge needs across the world, and in Kolkata in particular, there are things we can do to help. For instance other schools have responded and raised money in all sorts of ways so CRS can provide the children in their schools with food.e.g.:

- a sponsored walk to Kolkata (not really walking to Kolkata but the all the pupils walking the distance round the playground that it would be to get to Kolkata)
- a sponsored sleep out in shelters the pupils have made themselves as many of the children in CRS schools have to live in shelters on the streets of Kolkata

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- a film night
 - and even one boy called Carlos, who was good a cartwheeling, did a sponsored cartwheel raising a good amount of money (and made himself dizzy!)

Is there something this school could do to support CRS? What could we offer?

SENDING

Finish with one of these songs:

You Can Make Difference (Fischy Music)

Speak Up <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/global-neighbours/fischy-music>)

When I Needed A Neighbour (resources to unpack this song can also be found at <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/global-neighbours/fischy-music>)

This little light of mine

Visit <https://www.cathedralreliefservice.net/donate/uk/> to find various ways that you can make a donation to the work of CRS, using the money raised through whatever way you end up choosing.

This QR code will take to a resources page where you will find the film 'One City, Three Lives, One World' and accompanying resources that follows the lives of three children supported through CRS.



Appendix 1

John 6:1-12 - Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

Jesus went across Lake Galilee (or, Lake Tiberias, as it is also called). A large crowd followed him, because they had seen his miracles of healing the sick. Jesus went up a hill and sat down with his disciples. The time for the Passover Festival was near. Jesus looked around and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, so he asked Philip, "Where can we buy enough food to feed all these people?" (He said this to test Philip; actually he already knew what he would do.)

Philip answered, "For everyone to have even a little, it would take more than two hundred silver coins to buy enough bread."

Another one of his disciples, Andrew, who was Simon Peter's brother, said, "There is a boy here who has five loaves of barley bread and two fish. But they will certainly not be enough for all these people."

"Make the people sit down," Jesus told them. (There was a lot of grass there.) So all the people sat down; there were about five thousand men. Jesus took the bread, gave thanks to God, and distributed it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish, and they all had as much as they wanted. When they were all full, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces left over; let us not waste a bit."

Appendix 2



Here are a few children at one of the schools supported by CRS having a simple lunch provided by CRS. Without this they would not have anything to eat in the middle of the day.