

Give water for life!

Bishop of St Albans' Harvest Appeal 2009



Christian Aid/Caroline Wood

School sheet

Watery assembly

In advance, you'll need to have filled a large container (eg 2-litre fizzy drink bottle, 5- or 10-litre camping water carrier) with water, added a handful of potting compost if it's a bottle you don't intend using again for drinking water, and with the top fastened very tightly. Place it somewhere in the school that won't be too difficult to direct children to find.

Ask the children to call out all the ways they have used water today or all the ways they can think of using water (washing, flushing the toilet, washing or cooking vegetables, etc). Tell the children that the Bible talks about water a lot. Remind them that the events in it took place in hot and dry countries and a long time ago so it was much harder and more important for people to get enough water than it is for us, here, today.

Ask the children to think of stories in the Bible about water (eg Jesus turning water into wine, God working through Moses to turn the Nile to blood, Jesus walking on the water, Jesus being baptised, etc).

Explain that although we can turn on a tap whenever we want water, for many people in the world, they have to travel

a long way to get it. Illustrate this by sending two children to fetch the water container you placed in the school beforehand – making sure that they are young enough to find it difficult.

When they return, ask them how they would feel if they had to travel, say, a mile (describe it as walking to a particular place close by that they would know, such as the parish church or a particular corner shop) to fetch water. And how they would feel if it was their job to fetch water for their whole family (because dad was working in the fields, because younger brothers and sisters were too little to walk all that way, etc). And how they would feel doing this every day.

If you dirtied the water with compost, make the point that for many of these people, the water they travel so far to fetch is not even clean.

Explain that our diocese is raising money this harvest to give many people in Africa a clean safe water supply close to their homes, so they won't have to make long journeys for dirty water any more, and that your school is joining in with this.



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If appropriate and if time allows, you could go on to tell them a story about water, such as Jesus' baptism from Matthew 3. Explain the symbolism of his baptism and how our baptising of babies is a symbol of that as well, perhaps referring to a recent baby's baptism in your own church.

If time allows, you could tell the story of one of the people whose life has been changed by the Water Action project in Ethiopia, using the leaflet or story sheet.

End by asking them to remember this whenever they use water for the rest of today.

Fundraising challenge

A simple but effective fundraising idea would be to challenge all the children to bring in a small plastic water bottle filled with coins for the appeal. The challenge could be given to them a few weeks in advance and they could be asked to bring the money in for your special appeal assembly. Alternatively you might wish to issue the challenge at the assembly and ask them to bring in their bottles before the half-term holiday.

Appeal prayer

As well as the prayer on the appeal prayer card, you may find it helpful to use the following as part of an assembly:

A simple tap.
Water that is reliable, clean, there.
O God, whenever I drink
or clean my teeth, or take a bath,
water the garden,
wash vegetables or clothes,
remind me to give thanks,
wholeheartedly,
for the freedom that surrounds me –
and I hardly notice it.

(Janet Morley)



Prayer points

Instead of a set prayer, you may wish to use the following prayer points:

- Ask God to bless the work of Water Action in Ethiopia.
- Ask God to bless the people who will have a new water supply, that their lives will be transformed.
- Ask God to help people here to give generously to the Harvest Appeal.
- Ask God to help us to do all we can so that one day everyone in the world will have clean safe water to drink.

How we can help you

For more information (including longer versions of the two stories in the appeal leaflet) and resources, please contact: Valerie Geldard, Administrator, St Albans Diocesan Board for Church and Society, Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans AL1 1HE, tel: 01727 851748, email: vgeldard@stalbans.anglican.org or see the Diocesan website: www.stalbans.anglican.org/mission.htm where you will also find a downloadable PowerPoint.

If you would like us to provide a speaker for your assembly or a visiting teacher, please contact Valerie Geldard (details above) – we'd be delighted to come and meet you.

Other resources and taking it further

You may find it helpful to refer to the appeal poster, leaflet and prayer card during your assembly or lesson. There are longer versions of the two stories from the leaflet on the diocesan website at www.stalbans.anglican.org/mission

As well as the ideas on this sheet, there is a wealth of resources for schools on the subject of water on Christian Aid's website for teachers, Learn – visit <http://learn.christianaid.org.uk> and use the search box in the top right corner of the page. Learn includes assembly outlines, classroom activities, educational games and lesson plans. If you have internet access in your classroom, children could explore the pages about water on Christian Aid's excellent children's website, Global Gang – visit www.globalgang.org and again, use the search box in the top right corner of the page.