

Secondary assembly

Education Sunday 2010

CALLED TO SERVE

This is a suggested script for an act of collective worship that is most suitable for a Church school and that will last about twelve minutes. If you are taking an assembly in a community school, talk to the teacher about how explicitly Christian they want the assembly to be. Some schools may prefer you to simply lead the period of reflection rather than including a spoken prayer, for example.

Words in italics are instructions to you, or areas that specifically need your personal input. You will of course want to adapt it to make it your own. Be prepared to talk about your own experience of finding your vocation; people love to hear real life stories.

You will need:

- A large sheet of card, cut into six to eight jigsaw pieces
- Some blu-tack
- A black marker pen
- An item of clothing that is worn by someone doing a specific job, for example a postman's jacket. Ask to borrow something from someone at church!
- A chocolate bar

Quiz

I wonder what would be the most boring job in the world? Keith Jackson is a technical manager for a paint manufacturer and his work is watching paint dry! He has to assess the drying times of different types of industrial paint so they know how long to leave the paint before adding another coat. In fact he really enjoys his job, but it doesn't sound very exciting does it?

Some jobs have been renamed to make them sound more interesting. What job do you think these new job titles refer to? *Invite answers from pupils.*

- 1) Domestic Technician – housewife
- 2) Transparency Enhancement Facilitator – window cleaner
- 3) Education Centre Nourishment Consultant – dinner lady
- 4) Customer Experience Enhancement Consultant – shop assistant
- 5) Media Distribution Officer – paper boy

Ever since you were small you have probably had people asking you, 'what do you want to do when you grow up?' At different stages in your school life, you have to make decisions about what subjects you're going to do, based on the answer to that question. But it's a difficult question to answer isn't it? And that's what we're going to think about in this assembly:

How will you discover what you want to do with your life?

Read or tell the story of Jeremiah's call from Jeremiah 1:4-10. Few of us hear God speaking to us that clearly, but Jeremiah's story shows that God has given gifts to each of us no matter what age we are. Discovering

our calling will probably take us a bit longer than it did Jeremiah but Christians believe that we can know what God is inviting us to do with our lives. Will we be like Jeremiah and use the gifts God has given us?

Some suggestions

I have three suggestions I want to share with you that might help you answer that question - How will you discover what you want to do with your life?

Firstly, it can be helpful to view finding the answer to this question as rather like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Instead of expecting to wake up one morning with a flash of inspiration knowing what you want to do with the rest of your life, you could see it as a process of putting together bits of a puzzle. Some of the bits you might discover when you're at school; others you will find once you leave school and get some more experience. *Stick three or four of your puzzle pieces up at the front so everyone can see. Leave the puzzle incomplete to emphasise the process of finding our vocation.*

Secondly, you want to find something that 'fits' you. *Put on your item of clothing!* This is a postman's jacket that I borrowed from my friend and it fits me rather well – but that's not the kind of 'fit' that I'm taking about! What you want to do is find a job that fits your gifts, personality and ability – the things you're good at and the type of person you are. So actually aspects of being a postman wouldn't fit me at all well, because I'm rubbish at getting up early in the morning and I hate going out in the cold and rain. *Take off the jacket. Talk about how your current work fits your gifts and personality, writing relevant words on the puzzle pieces at the front. For example, someone might say 'I became a youth worker because when I was a teenager I was part of a youth group, and the leader really helped me', and write 'inspired' on a puzzle piece, and then add 'I enjoy helping young people achieve things they haven't done before', writing 'mentor' on another piece of puzzle.* So a good place to start is to ask yourself what you're good at. What do you enjoy doing? What achievements are you proud of, and what aspects of them would you like to repeat? What skills would you like to develop further? These questions will help you start to find the pieces of your puzzle. Eric Liddell was an athlete whose story was made into the film *Chariots of Fire* – a golden oldie! He was a Christian and said about his running, 'When I run, I feel God's pleasure.' Christians believe that God calls us to use our gifts in all areas of life, not just in working for the church, so be prepared to think widely.

Thirdly, you might want to look for some of this. *Take a bite of the chocolate bar and make a show of enjoying it, making 'mmmmm!' noises!* No, I'm not suggesting that you should all become chocolate tasters and we all know that we should enjoy chocolate in moderation! But I think ideally the work that we do should give us moments of going 'mmmmmm!', should bring us a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction, of enjoyment and achievement. Of course even the best job in the world will have times of frustration or challenge and will need hard work and determination. And we'll probably find that fulfilment in surprising ways, so that rather than being selfish and just thinking about our own happiness, we'll find fulfilment in serving others and in doing something worthwhile that benefits other people in our community. *Give an example of an aspect of your work that you find fulfilling, and write it on another piece of the puzzle. Choose one that emphasises the importance to you of serving God through your work.* As you're thinking about what work you might do in the future, consider what experiences you've had already that have given you a sense of fulfilment. How might you develop those in the work that you do in the future? How could you use your gifts to benefit others? When these three things are in place – the process of fitting bits of the puzzle together, when work fits someone's gifts and skills and when they have a sense of fulfilment at work – we say that someone has found their vocation, something that they feel they were born to do, something that makes their life sing. Let me leave you with a quote from Parker Palmer:

'Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to be something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I am born to be, to fulfil the original selfhood given me by God at birth.'

Reflection

Invite pupils to pause for a moment and to reflect on the question you've been considering: How will they discover what they want to do with their lives? Invite them to think about the three suggestions you have made:

- What pieces of the jigsaw puzzle are already in place?
- What are the gifts and skills they have that their work might fit onto?
- What types of experiences give them a sense of fulfilment?

And then a final question: who are the people who can help you in this process – friends, family and people at school?

Prayer

Invite pupils to listen to this prayer and to say Amen at the end if they want to join in.

Creator God, thank you that you have made each one of us and given us gifts.

Help us to hear your voice as we explore the possibilities open to us.

Inspire and guide us as we discover and develop our vocation.

May we use our gifts in your service and for your glory.

Amen

Additional ideas

- Encourage participation. As pupils file into assembly, you could hand out post-it notes to those who have arrived first and ask them to write down what job they want to do when they are adults. You could then read out a selection of the answers. If you are a regular visitor to the school and have access to the technology, you could film a few pupils answering the question and show their answers in the assembly vox-pop style.
- Talk about the decisions that will be made by those in the school year you are addressing, or in the years ahead: Year 9 will be choosing their GCSE subjects; Year 11 will be choosing courses to study in the sixth form or at college; Year 12 will be deciding which AS subject to drop and what to do after school; Year 13 will be filling in UCAS forms or applying for colleges, jobs and apprenticeships.
- You could create a PowerPoint presentation to accompany this outline if the school has the facilities to show it. For example, put the quiz, the question and the quote on slides with suitable images in the background.
- For excellent advice on how to do a school assembly visit the schoolwork.co.uk website: <http://schoolwork.co.uk/inneedto/plan-an-assembly>

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