

## LITTLE WAY WEEK LESSON PLAN KEY STAGE 4

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To reflect on how St Thérèse's Little Way of doing small actions with love can make a big difference.
2. Consider how, through the 'little way' of love and service, the Church fulfils its mission to share God's life and love with everyone by bringing hope to those in desperate situations.
3. Understand how it is by our small everyday actions that we witness to God's life and love to people both near and far away.
4. Explore ways in which everyone can follow a 'little way' to fulfil the mission of the Church.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. **All will:**  
Understand that St Thérèse's Little Way is one of ordinary actions done with great love. See that in love and service the Church fulfils its mission to share God's life and love with people all over the world.
2. **Most will:**  
Make connections between following their own 'little way' and the mission of the Church. Appreciate that it is what we do and what we say that determines what kind of witnesses we are to the life and love of God.
3. **Some will:**  
Make connections between following their own 'little way' and the mission of the Church.

### RE CURRICULUM FOCUS

#### The Church 2.5 Vocation to Mission

Our teaching is of Christ as Head of the Church; the ultimate knowledge and understanding that the purpose of this mission is to enable all of us to share in the communion of life and love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our pupils are called to share with the whole People of God in expressing this mission through serving contemporary society as priest, prophet and king. Together we are called to worship God through our every action for the common good. Through our actions the Church is to continue as the sign and source of reconciliation and hope in the victory of Christ to present our goodness to God.



**TIME** 60 minutes

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### INTRODUCTION

#### Tell the class that:

- Approximately one quarter of the population of South Africa is unemployed and lives below the poverty line. 5.6 million people live with HIV – more than any country in the world and there are now approximately 3 million AIDS orphans.
- Rustenburg, in the North-West Province, is home to the two largest platinum mines in the world. The mines bring mass migration of workers from neighbouring countries including thousands of women who set up homes with their children in shacks of zinc and wood. Rustenburg has one of the highest rates of HIV/AIDS in the country.
- Freedom Park is home to massive informal squatter camps for 25,000 people and is just one of many in Rustenburg. One water tap serving 20,000 people is not unusual. The water lorry comes twice a week and there is no electricity, no water and no rubbish collection.
- Since the 1990s the Catholic Church has been involved in providing support to those suffering from HIV/AIDS when it established a small clinic in a shipping container. It has now grown to a programme providing treatment and counselling to hundreds of adults and children every year. Crucially, it provides antiretroviral drugs to people with HIV.
- Trained carers support 400 orphaned and vulnerable children in their homes, providing counselling, spiritual and emotional support, nutrition, basic health and hygiene education and skills training.
- **Show the class the 4 minute film clip. Explain that the three women shown live in Freedom Park and all suffer from HIV. The man at the beginning of the clip is the Catholic Bishop of Rustenburg, Kevin Dowling, who set up the clinic over twenty years ago.**

### INVITE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Ask what they notice about Zanele, the woman with the baby who has HIV and is about to begin medication? Note how Zanele is thin and sick. She has such little energy she struggles to pick up her baby. She is fearful for the future, she has no hope.
2. Now ask what they see about the outreach worker and the second woman who has been treated for two years? Suggestions might be: They have more energy. The woman is able to look after her children and because she is able to hold down a job she does not have to rely on a boyfriend to support her and her children. Consider how the small everyday actions of the women's lives have been transformed by the medication they receive.
3. Why do they think people like Bishop Dowling, and the priests and religious sisters, choose to live alongside the people of Freedom Park? Elicit words like love, service, hope, care, peace, Gospel values, faith.

***'Will I live long enough to show my gratitude?'***  
**Zanele, resident of Freedom Park Rustenburg South Africa**

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**Show the photographs of Anna and her friends attached.** Explain that the Catholic Church is bringing **hope** to the people of Rustenburg. Anna's story is one such story. Like the rest of her family she was infected with Aids but was the only one to survive. After she was brought to the clinic at Freedom Park she was put on medication and Anna has gone from strength to strength ever since. She enjoys school and is growing up to be a confident young woman who takes pride in herself and who has had her dignity returned to her. Anna wants to go to university when she is older to study Social Care and then she hopes to return to Freedom Park to do for others what has been done for her. Like those who have helped her, Anna wants to give her life in **love** and **service**.

Anna has found her vocation in life; she knows what kind of person she wants to be.

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*'Joy adapts and changes but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved.'*

*Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, Evangelii Gaudium*

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### ST THÉRÈSE

Like Anna, **St. Thérèse of Lisieux** had youthful dreams of who she wanted to be. She dreamt of becoming a saint and doing great works for God, like going overseas to share God's life and love with the poor and oppressed. She said to Jesus, 'I would travel to every land to preach Thy Name ...I would be a missionary from the beginning of the world until the end of time.' But this was not in God's plan for her; and instead, she chose to become a religious sister. Aged fifteen, she entered the confines of the Carmelite convent in Lisieux, France where she remained until her death nine years later.

The chores she was given in the convent were often menial, but she accepted them without complaint. St Thérèse was strong-willed and liked to get her own way, so she had to work hard to remember to put others first. For example, an elderly sister who sat near St Thérèse during evening meditation used to make strange clacking noises. St Thérèse found the noise particularly tiresome. Much as she longed to turn around to draw it to sister's attention, she chose not to embarrass the sister and instead endured her discomfort and offered it to God. Another religious sister she thought particularly irritating never knew how St Thérèse felt about her because St Thérèse was always polite and kind to her.

It was after reading St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians (1Cor: 13) that St Thérèse learnt that true love means accepting others' faults, not being surprised at their mistakes and seeing others as God sees them. St Thérèse learnt that **it is the small things done with love that make a difference.**

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She set about building into her daily routine actions done with love. This is what she called her **'Little Way'** and it was so quiet and humble that nobody noticed what she was doing. St Thérèse appreciated how much she needed Jesus' help to make loving choices. By praying to him every day, she obtained the strength to live out her **Little Way**.

St Thérèse had found her vocation! She said, **"I realised that Love covered every type of vocation, that Love was everything, that it embraced all times and places...Love is my vocation!"**

She was also mindful of those the world had forgotten. During her long illness from tuberculosis she offered up her pain and suffering for the poor, the weary, the crushed and the hopeless. It was during this difficult time that she overheard one of the sisters at the convent say about her, "Though the little Sister is very good, she has certainly never done anything worth speaking about."

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***'Though the little Sister is very good, she has certainly never done anything worth speaking about.'***

***Unnamed Carmelite sister talking about Thérèse***

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But the 'little Sister' has shown us how, by doing small things with love, greatness can be achieved and how **the ordinary becomes extraordinary**. The Church recognised what she had done by making her a saint in 1923, only 26 years after her death. Today, she is a popular saint known throughout the world, as well as being one of only four women Doctors of the Church. This means that her writings and guidance are acknowledged by the Church to have influenced its teaching. Although she never set foot outside Europe, and despite living in a cloistered convent for nine years, she became the patroness of Mission.

It is this same love that motivates the priests and religious sisters who choose to live in Rustenburg to be with the people who are suffering from HIV /Aids, and it is the same love that inspires Anna to return to Freedom Park to help the people, just as she, too, has been helped. Their 'little way' of love and service is fulfilling the mission of the Church to bring God's life and love to everyone, everywhere.

Like St Thérèse, these men and women may not be celebrities, they do not have wealth, power or status but they will be remembered for doing ordinary actions 'worth speaking about' and which are making a huge difference to the lives of others.

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### AS A CLASS read St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 13 The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

*If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.*

*Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

*Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*

#### Explain that:

- The pupils are at the age when they are frequently asked about their plans for the future – what they want to do when they grow up, whether they intend to go to university and what it is they want to study, but they are rarely, if ever, asked what kind of person they want to be or what will motivate them? Is it power, money or status? Perhaps they are motivated by love, or maybe they want to make a difference?
- St Thérèse was not concerned with riches, fame, status or power; rather, she chose to use her gifts and talents in the service of God. In her **Little Way** of doing small everyday actions with love, she was fulfilling the mission of the Church to make God's life and love known through love and service. It was a struggle for her but it seemed so unremarkable that nobody thought anything of it.
- Anna, too, has discovered her vocation to live a life of love and service to the people of Freedom Park. Whatever our plans for the future might be, they can always include a 'little way' of humble witness to the life and love of God. Invite suggestions of ways in which the small everyday things pupils do or say may make a big difference to the lives of those living near to and far away from them. Examples might be giving up their seat on the bus to someone who needs it, sharing what they have or praying for those who are without hope.
- Pupils may go onto the Missio website: [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk) to find out more about Missio, the Catholic Church's official overseas missionary charity which works with the most vulnerable people in the world, regardless of background or belief.

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### ACTIVITY

Pupils are to imagine that they are compiling The School Year Book but this book has a difference! In this Year Book they are reviewing how they are helping the Church to fulfil its mission to share God's life and love. They need to consider that it is the small, every day actions that make the difference. Remind them that St Thérèse was said to have done 'nothing worth speaking about'!

Split the class into groups of 3 or 4. In their groups pupils should discuss and make a note of:

- How would they like to be remembered by staff, other year groups, their peers, members of the public they encounter, e.g. visitors to the school or on the bus?  
Encourage words like loving, reliable, polite, hard-working, patient, trustworthy, kind, compassionate, self -controlled, honest, joyful. Invite them to give examples of what behaviour would achieve these characteristics, e.g. letting a teacher pass in the corridor, being considerate to other pupils, even ones they find difficult.
- How would they like to be remembered by the poor, oppressed and vulnerable people living overseas, like those living with HIV/AIDS in Freedom Park? Suggestions might be that they pray for them and pray for the priests and religious who work with them. They may share what they have by using their gifts and talents to raise money for charities like Missio, so that God's love is made known around the world.
- Like St Thérèse, pupils should identify what they will find hard and when they will need to ask Jesus for help. Suggestions might be: not complaining, doing what they are asked when they do not feel like it, e.g. getting home on time from a night out, working hard in a subject they dislike.
- Invite the groups to report back to the whole class what they have discussed.

### PLENARY

#### Ask pupils to identify:

1. One thing that they have learnt about St Thérèse's Little Way.
2. How a 'little way' of love and service is a good way for the Church to fulfil its mission to share God's life and love with everyone.
3. One small everyday action that will witness to God's life and love to people near to them.
4. One small everyday action that will witness to God's life and love to people overseas and living without hope.



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### CONCLUDE WITH The Missio Mission Prayer

God of all peoples, you call us  
Together in love and send us out  
In mission to share the gift of  
faith that all may know Christ.  
May we be effective  
Messengers of your Word,  
Bringing the compassion  
Of Christ, the light of the world,  
To all who are poor and  
marginalised.  
We ask this through Jesus  
Christ who lives and reigns with  
You and the holy Spirit, for ever  
And ever. Amen.

Little Way Week is offered in partnership by Missio, Home Mission Desk (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales) and Wednesday Word. **For additional materials please see: [www.catholicnews.org.uk/little-way-week](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/little-way-week).**

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**ANNA (ON THE LEFT) WITH FRIENDS**



**ANNA WITH BISHOP KEVIN DOWLING**

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