



CIYD



Before you finished BREAKFAST



A collection of Bible based school
assemblies on global justice themes

Introduction

Welcome to this collection of talks for school assemblies created for CIYD by Tearfund Ireland. All the talks are Biblically based, with a Global Citizenship Education approach. The talks all include a suggested aim, Bible passage, visual activity/illustration, talk, points of reflection and a closing prayer. The hope is that they will be easy to use and adapt to each unique school context.

There are links to supporting resources for speakers in a number of the talks and one of the talks has an accompanying PowerPoint. The PowerPoint can be found on the CIYD website or by emailing luke@ciyd.org

Please send us your feedback, we would love to hear how you used this resource: luke@ciyd.org



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(Suggested Order based on seasons of the year)

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1. Small but Mighty



Aim To consider that small actions we take can be a step in changing situations, even when they seem too big to tackle



Bible passage Matthew 14:13-21 (The Feeding of the 5,000)



Materials needed PowerPoint slides that accompany this talk and/or five small rolls and two fish (optional)



Talk 'The Feeding of the 5,000' is probably one of the best-known miracles performed by the Lord Jesus recorded in the Bible. The event takes place after large crowds follow Jesus, keen to hear his teachings and see his healing power at work.

As the day wears on Jesus' disciples get increasingly concerned that there is a vast, hungry crowd of more than 5,000 people with no food available. The disciples urge Jesus to send the crowd away to find themselves food as the problem is too big for them to handle.

However Jesus has a different plan in mind, he knows that the crowd is in real need and that he and his disciples can do something about it.

One of the disciples, Andrew found a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish – asking Jesus "But how far will they go among so many?"

The young boy would probably have been overlooked by many as someone who could help in this crisis situation, yet even though he was young, even though he may have seemed insignificant, even though the amount he had was small, he had something to offer to help to solve the problem.

Jesus then invites the young boy to partner with him in sharing what little he has - five loaves of bread and two small fish. Jesus then prays to his Father in heaven. The loaves and the fish are multiplied and the crowd is fed and fully satisfied.

Jesus gives his disciples the task of ensuring that there is no waste and they pick up 12 baskets of left-overs!

This harvest, how do you even begin to tackle a major challenge like the impact of climate change? Particularly if you are a farmer in Ethiopia unable to grow enough food to feed your family because of the erratic weather? Well sometimes what seems small can in fact be mighty!

Something as insignificant as the humble worm is changing that.

Arba's Story



Arba is a farmer living in Southern Ethiopia. Like so many farmers in the area his ability to grow enough food to feed his family was diminishing due to the changing climate. Desperate and in debt, he tried using expensive fertilizer but that just led to more debt and his crop yields didn't increase.

Arba was getting more and more desperate.

Then last year, like Philip bringing the young boy with his five loaves and two fish to Jesus to help feed a hungry crowd, a friend introduced him to a Tearfund Ireland vermiculture project – where farmers are trained to use the simple, humble worm to make compost.

Could something as small and insignificant as a worm make any sort of change to his life and circumstances? The answer was a resounding yes!

Arba embraced this method of producing nutrient rich compost and in just one year, Arba's crop yield increased by nearly three times! He has begun producing compost for himself, farmers in his own village and farmers in other villages too.

Arba is no longer in debt and produces enough food for the family.

"When I started the vermi-compost, neighbours were laughing at me.... however, they have seen how production has doubled in my farm and the family has not run out of food almost year-round".

Like the 5,000 people fed with five loaves and two small fish, with something small as worms, Arba and his family have seen their lives transformed. Not only in terms of food production, but also with a new-found respect in the community. And Arba is coming alongside other farmers too, sharing his new-found knowledge so that they can see their lives transformed as well.



Reflection It is easy for us to think what we have in our hands is too miniscule to solve a problem and won't do anything in the face of the enormous challenges facing so many. Take a little bit of time today to think about what small thing do you have to hand that could be the start of solving a problem you are facing?



Prayer

God, thank you that you value the little things, the things we might even see as inconsequential. Thank you that you see value in the parts of us that we deem weak or insignificant. Every part of us matters to You. Thank you that you see value in the parts of your creation that are easily overlooked and you have made us for interconnection. Continue to help us to create healthy connections – to ourselves, to You, to each other and to your creation. Amen.



Arba farmer Ethiopia showing some of his crop of yam grown using worm compost – credit Tearfund Ireland

Worms used in vermiculture in Southern Ethiopia courtesy Tearfund Ireland Ethiopia



2. Before you Finished Breakfast



Aim To understand our global interconnectedness and to evoke empathy



Bible Reading: Isaiah 58:1-7



Materials needed Common food items (and note of where they come from. Examples could include Chocolate – Ghana; Coffee – Columbia; Sugar – Malawi; Bananas – St.Lucia; Tea – India; Apples – South Africa; Lime – Brazil; Sweetcorn – Thailand etc.), flip chart and pen (optional)



Illustration Hold up some food items and say where they have come from or alternatively ask for volunteers to suggest where they think they have come from.

Ask the group if they can think of anything they have eaten in the past 24 hours and where it might have come from: Chocolate – Ghana; Coffee – Columbia; Sugar – Malawi; Bananas – St.Lucia; Tea – India; Apples – South Africa; Lime – Brazil; Sweetcorn – Thailand etc.



Talk

We all have a story. Part of our story includes what we had for breakfast. The producers of our food also have a story, and our stories are connected though we may never meet.

More than 50 years ago Dr Martin Luther King was able to say, “Before you’ve finished breakfast this morning, you’ll have relied on half the world.” Think about what you had for breakfast, or the items you used since you got up this morning. Where in the world did they come from? Have you relied on products/produce from other countries? If so which ones? And how many?

Ask Well, if a banana costs 50c and travels half-way around the world, how much do you think the farmer is getting for it? Given the amount of work put in and the major challenges of climate change - Is this fair or just?



Isaiah 58:1-7

Read v 1-3a These verses seem to show us something of a problem between God and his people. God talks about his people being rebellious and yet they think they are leading lives that would please God such as fasting and seeking God on a daily basis. What’s gone wrong?

(Read v 3b-5) God explains to his people that their seemingly good activities mask rhythms of injustice and violence. They can't see that how they treat those they are connected to is just as important to God as their 'religious activity'. The stuff that they think they are doing right is not really what God is looking for. Read v 6-7. God tells them exactly what he wants his people to do. He wants them to look around to see who they are connected to and allow their lives and decisions to positively impact those circumstances. He wants them to have a rhythm of justice in their behaviour.

Ask the young people how these verses relate to us today? Where might God see our lives having a rhythm of injustice woven through them?

Every day, through what we use (like our phones), what we wear and what we eat, we are connected to some of the world's poorest people. Whether we're aware of it or not, we may have a rhythm of injustice that weaves its way through our lives.

Ask the young people to think of ideas of how they can use this connection for good. If appropriate make a list of ideas. Encourage them to think specifically about how they shop eg. Buying Fairtrade goods, shopping locally, finding out how to support sustainable farming projects in Ireland and overseas etc.



Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for the hard work of all those who grow, protect and prepare our food; for the shopkeepers, the transport delivery drivers, the processors and the farmers. Bless all those, Lord, who do not earn a fair day's pay for their hard work, both at home and in other countries. Help us to want to buy local produce and fairly-traded goods wherever we can so that everyone can work with dignity and there will be no more poverty. **Amen**¹

¹ Adapted from <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/harvest-intercessions.pdf>

3. What in the World?



Aim To challenge perceptions and nurture critical thinking about how we see the world



Bible Passage Luke 10:25-42 (The Good Samaritan)



Materials needed Find an image of a Peters projection map and of a map that has Europe at the periphery and another that has Australia at the top. Project the maps onto a screen or print out copies to show the group <https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Different+World+Map+Projections&form=RESEAB&first=1>



Optional Watch “West Wing” Series 2 Episode 16 clip: Mercator vs Peters Projection map <https://youtu.be/H3Xyz9MgDWA>

Invite the group to look at the maps. Is there anything unusual about them? Do all the continents look as we would expect them to look?

(Note to leader: The Peters projection map shows land mass as it should be, so Europe looks smaller than in the more traditional Mercator map and Africa looks bigger. Other maps are available that show Europe at the side or ‘upside down’ at the bottom.)

Ask How does Europe look relative to other continents? Might this affect how we view Europe/other continents? Does Europe look as significant in the world?



Bible reflection One day an expert in the Jewish religious law came to Jesus with questions about God and how to inherit eternal life. In fact, he was trying to catch Jesus out. They had a conversation about the key commands to love God and to love our neighbour. The expert in the religious law finally asked Jesus this question “Who is my neighbour?” Jesus responded by telling a story about a man travelling on a dangerous road between Jerusalem and Jericho to illustrate what a good neighbour looks like.

In the story the man was set upon by bandits and after being beaten and robbed, was left badly injured the side of the road. Two religious officials from the Jewish community who might have been expected to stop and help, passed by the injured man without stopping. Finally, a Samaritan man, traditionally an enemy of the Jews, came upon the

scene and stopped to help.

The Samaritan man not only helped the injured man get to safety, but also paid for his care and committed to come back and check on how his recovery was progressing.

The expectation of those listening was that the Samaritan man was an enemy, and would definitely not help, but in the end, he was the only one who was a good neighbour to the injured man.

After telling the story, Jesus asked "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."



Reflection The way we expect the world to be, our perspective on the world, may be dictated by how other people see and illustrate the world. Sometimes it is good to step back and think about what we are being shown or told.

Today, in your interactions with others, think about your perspective. Have you got it right about people you don't know well in your class? Year group? Have you got the right perspective about people from other cultures and countries?

Ask God to change your perspective on people and places if you have got it wrong. Ask him to help you to be a good neighbour to someone today.



Prayer

Dear God, please open the eyes of my heart that I may see Jesus, and as I see Jesus more clearly, help me see everything else from his perspective.

Help me to see other people with eyes of grace. Father, help me to see the beauty and dignity in people made in your image, much more clearly than I notice their faults and weaknesses. And when I do see their weaknesses, may I do so with compassion and understanding, not with shock and irritation. Help me to see what you see in friends and family and even in total strangers. Help me to be a good neighbour today.

Amen

4. Jesus the Refugee



Aim To understand why people may leave their homes and to evoke empathy



Bible passage Matthew 2:13-17 (The Escape to Egypt)

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."^[c]

¹⁶ When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.



Materials rucksack or suitcase; a number of everyday items or images of every day items – preferably several that would be too big to fit into a rucksack like a scooter or bike/TV/computer/pillow/clothes/soft toy to represent a pet/passport/driver's licence/water bottle/packet of biscuits etc



Talk Hands up if you have ever been in a country outside Ireland? Do you know anyone who has travelled to a different country? People travel all the time, for work, for study, for holidays, to visit friends and family. What sort of things would you pack? Would you like to have a bit of time to prepare?

Right now, more than 120 million people have moved, having been forced to leave their homes – with little or no notice due to conflict, persecution or natural disasters. With little or no notice of having to leave, what sort of decisions would people make on what to bring. I have a bag here and some household items – Which of them would I bring? Any suggestions?

Which of them could I bring if I had to leave my home with little or no

notice? If I faced a long walk across rough terrain?

Did you know that some of the most famous characters, whose stories we read in the Bible were migrants and refugees? Abraham, Moses and the people of Israel who escaped from Egypt, Ruth, King David and many more. Did you know that Jesus himself was a refugee?

When he was still an infant Jesus' parents were warned in a dream to take Jesus to Egypt as his life was in danger. The local ruler, King Herod saw Jesus as a threat, even though he was only a small infant. The danger from King Herod was so serious and so imminent, the Bible tells us that once Joseph was warned by God in a dream, the family had to get up and leave immediately in the middle of the night to escape. They then spent 2 years waiting in Egypt until it was safe to return near to their former home and even then, they had to settle in a different part of the country.



Reflection question Why would God allow all these giants of the Bible and even Jesus himself to have to leave their homes and become migrants and refugees? Does it surprise you? Should it make us think twice about our attitude to refugees arriving in Ireland?

Though he was so vulnerable as a small child, God allowed Jesus himself to experience the life of a refugee. In our response to refugees arriving in Ireland, is our attitude like Jesus would ask of us? To welcome the stranger and show compassion for our neighbour; or is it more like Herod who sought to protect his own interests and threaten Jesus?



Prayer

Almighty and merciful God,
whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own;
look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger,
homeless and hungry.
Bless those who work to bring them relief;
inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;
and guide the nations of the world towards that day when all will rejoice
in your Kingdom of justice and of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. ¹

¹ <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/prayers-refugees>

5. Connecting the Dots

(Similar to Before you Finished Breakfast - suited to the season of Lent)



Aim To consider interconnectedness and the impact our lives may have on others although we may never meet



Bible passage 1 Corinthians 12: 18-21 'Our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you."'



Materials needed A 'Join the dots' puzzle picture and a felt pen; selection of clothes that have the country of manufacture printed on the label. Illustration Show the group a 'join the dots' puzzle picture and connect some of the dots as they watch. Ask the group if any of them used to do join the dots activities when they were younger? You can only see the full picture once the dots are joined.



Talk In the Bible passage, the writer St Paul is challenging the members of the church in Corinth about how interconnected they are with other people using the image of the body. An eye without hands or a head without feet would face challenges and limitations and can never say "I have no need of you". St Paul is encouraging them to value other people and their gifts, to recognise how we are interconnected and need one another.

Invite the group to look at the labels on their clothes or shoes (whether there or at home later). Hold up some examples of clothes and read the labels as to where they come from – examples may include Cambodia, Vietnam, China, India etc.

Tell the group just by the clothes we are wearing, we are connected to people all over the world right here, right now.

We all have a story. Part of our story may be the clothes we are wearing. The producers of our clothes also have a story; and our stories are connected though we may never meet. Often, we don't have the full picture about our clothes when we buy them. We don't have the dots about how our 'cheap clothes' may be 'costing' the people who make them in terms of low wages and poor working conditions.

Ask the group, 'If you can get a t shirt for €5 and it travels half-way around the world, how much do you think the seamstress is getting for it for the work they put in?'

'Would you buy cloth and spend the time making a t shirt for someone for €5? Once you pay for the cloth, how much would be left for you?' Every day, through what we wear, we may be connected to some of the world's lowest paid workers. Whether we're aware of it or not, we may have a rhythm of injustice that weaves its way through our lives when we buy fast fashion items.

When we join the dots, we can better see that we're connected to issues of poverty and injustice through our daily lives, even by the clothes we wear. So what do we do with that connection? How do we make the connection count?



Reflection Ask the young people for their ideas of how they can use this connection for good.

If appropriate, make a list of ideas and add to it through this discussion. Encourage them to think specifically about how they shop eg. Buying Fairtrade goods, shopping in charity shops, but also the fact that they can ask for things to change.

Tell the group about Fashion Revolution. Fashion Revolution is the world's largest fashion activism movement, advocating for a fashion industry that prioritizes people and the planet over profit. The movement campaigns for a clean, safe, fair, transparent, and accountable fashion industry.

Fashion Revolution Week takes place in April each year commemorating the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 when 2,000 garment workers in Bangladesh, making clothes for well-known brands died when their poorly built place of work collapsed. Find out how you can be involved in the 2026 annual campaign bringing together the world's largest fashion activism movement for seven days of action.

<https://www.fashionrevolution.org/>



Prayer

O God you hold our lives in your hands. You have promised to give us a new heart, and to put a new spirit in us. We pray: renew us every day. Forgive us where we have failed to be good stewards and to be good neighbours through negligence, through weakness or through our own deliberate fault. Give us the courage to think beyond our own lives; to live and consume responsibly so that our near and far neighbours can experience their full dignity, and that we can help restore and admire the beauty of our communities and of this earth. **Amen**¹

¹ Adapted from the CIYD Climate Justice Toolkit Companion talks

6. What is an Elephant?



Aim To encourage the group to consider that there is never just a single story or perspective on world issues. To encourage active listening although opinions may differ.



Bible passage James 1:19

'My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.'



Materials An image or model of an elephant



Optional watch Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story | TED <https://youtu.be/D9lhs241zeg>



Talk

There is an old Indian story told about six blind men who were keen to find out what an elephant was like. One day they were delighted to get the opportunity to visit one. Although they couldn't actually see the elephant, each of the men took time to explore the elephant. (illustrate with the elephant as you go through the list below). Each man approached a different part of the elephant.

- one the tail
- one the trunk
- one the leg
- one the side
- one the ear
- one the ivory tusk

On returning to their home village, as the men tried to explain to their friends and neighbours about what an elephant was like, they got into a terrible argument, with each thinking they knew the whole picture from the part that they had touched.

- The man who had touched the tail said an elephant was like a rope
- The man who had touched the trunk said an elephant was like a snake
- The man who had felt the leg, said, no, an elephant is like a tree trunk
- The man who had touched the side of the elephant was sure it was like a huge wall
- The man who felt the elephant's ear said it was like a large blanket
- And the man who had felt along the elephant's tusk declared that an elephant was like a spear.

Were they right?

Perhaps they were all correct with the limited information that they had, but at the same time they were all wrong too!

The experience of life is a bit like that of the six blind men. Each of us has experience of a small slice of life and can be tempted to believe that we can see the whole picture.

Of course we don't see the full picture, particularly on the big issues like conflict, climate change or migration, but our individual slice of life is an important piece of the puzzle that should be shared with others.



Reflection 'My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.' James 1:19

This verse comes from a letter in the Bible. The apostle James was writing to Christians who were facing many challenges, including persecution, poverty and uncertainty. He was sharing important wisdom with them that would help them get through the difficult times together.

Just like the men in the story, rather than stubbornly insisting that our own perspective is the only one, we should pause before we speak, try to listen and not jump to conclusions.

This week will you take time to patiently listen to someone else's perspective, even if it is different from yours?



Prayer The Franciscan Prayer of Discomfort

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

And the Blessing of God, who Creates, Redeems and Sanctifies, be upon you and all you love an pray for this day, and forever more **Amen**



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