**

5th MARCH 2016 **‘UNITED APPEAL FOR MISSION SUNDAY’**

Children’s address ideas

## Introduction

These are ideas that can be used and adapted to help children understand the focus of the United Appeal teaching this year: because Jesus loves us we can love others. They are outlines to get you started on how you might interact with the children in the service and help them understand both the biblical teaching and what it might mean for them to contribute to the United Appeal Sunday.

While the sermon notes focus specifically on Philippians 2, this may be a difficult story to convey to primary aged children and so these outlines are going to focus on verses 4 and 5; the general understanding of loving each other and following Jesus. Teaching children these truths is an important part of their discipleship, but to enable their understanding to be more developed, you will need to adapt the overall idea to suit the exact age range and the children in your congregation.

Each of the ideas incorporate interaction, using either visual aids or an object. Using some sort of visual example will help children to not only hear the message you are sharing but will help them to remember what the teaching is afterwards. While each example offers a different visual or object, the message and passage for each is exactly the same.

Feel free to adapt these in any way that works best in your situation.

The following ideas are aimed at the full primary school age range of 4-11 years.

# Idea 1

**Preparation**

Have access to a map of the country – either a physical map or projected onto a screen.

**Introduction**

Show the children the map and point to your area.

Ask them if they can see from the map where they live, or if they can remember where their friends or relatives live and point it out.

Also ask them to try and find places they have visited or want to visit.

Show them the exact location of your church.

**Explain** to the children that this is only a map of the country we live in, there are lots of other countries around the world and lots more people too. Say that we are very lucky that we live somewhere where we are looked after. There are lots of people in the world who don’t have the things that we do.

**Question Time**

Ask the children to give you some examples of the things they have e.g. food, shelter, education etc.

Ask how they would feel if they didn’t have those things – scared, hungry, cold etc.

Do you think there is any way we can help the people around the world who don’t have the same things we do? Allow them time to answer.

**Bible Bit**

Read Philippians 2:4-5 with the children. The passage below is taken from the International Children’s Bible.

*“Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others. In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.”*

**Application**

Explain that in this passage Paul is writing a letter to the people in Philippi. He was encouraging them to stop being selfish and to put others first. When Jesus lived on earth, he helped lots of people and he did this because he wanted to show them that God loves them. When we love Jesus and say we follow Him, it means that we try to obey the things He asks us to do and live by His example. It means that when we go to school, we try to act like Jesus would. What might that involve? Allow time for answers e.g. telling the truth, being kind to others, helping etc.

Another part of following Jesus is loving other people even if we don’t really know them. That means that we try to do things for other people around the world who don’t have as much as we do. We can pray for them and do practical things to help. For example, our Church (the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) raises money which is used to help people here learn more about God. The money also helps people overseas who may not have enough food, or be able to go to school or may not have a house to live in. The money raised is called the United Appeal.

The word “appeal” means to ask, and so each person in all 550 churches in Ireland is asked if they can give a little bit of what they have to help others. The word “united” means altogether – we give our money to support mission both here in Ireland and overseas through lots of different projects because together, as one big church family of lots of congregations, we can help many more people than each of us could on our own.

It is very important that you understand that this is not just for the big people in the congregation – there are lots of things that you can do to help too!

The biggest thing that you can do for other people is pray; it is so important that you talk to God and pray for people in Ireland and around the world who don’t have as much as we do.

In Sunday school/children’s church ask if you can do something together to raise some money to help others e.g. start a change jar where everyone can donate their coppers.

Talk to your mum and dad, your relatives and your friends and encourage them to make a difference too.

# Idea 2

**Preparation**

Have access to a spring-loaded pen – before the talk remove the spring but keep it handy!

**Introduction**

Show the pen and explain that it doesn’t work.

Ask if they can guess why it doesn’t work – show them the spring if they guess correctly or eventually reveal it if they don’t.

Go through all the parts of the pen that are needed just to make the pen work:

A case for holding it

A tube for the ink

A tiny ball to roll the ink

A spring to help bring the writing part up and down

Explain that the spring is one of the tiniest parts but yet the pen won’t work without it. Then put it back in and use the pen.

**Bible Bit**

Read Philippians 2:4-5 with the children. The passage below is taken from the International Children’s Bible.

*“Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others. In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.”*

**Application**

Explain that in this passage Paul is writing a letter to the people in Philippi. He was encouraging them to stop being selfish and to put others first. Because God is a father to all of us, he says that we should be like brothers and sisters to each other. He gave us churches so that we could meet together, worship, learn about him and to serve others. We are all part of one big church, like one big family. We all love our mums and dads, brothers and sisters etc. so what if one of them was hungry? Would you find some food for them? What if they were cold? Would you give them a blanket?

When Jesus lived on earth, he helped lots of people and he did this because he wanted to show them that God loves them. When we love Jesus and say we follow Him, it means that we try to obey the things He asks us to do and live by His example. It means that if we see someone, not just people we know, but anyone who is sad, or lonely, or suffering in any way we must try to help them. This includes people who live close by, or very far away. There are lots of people around the world who don’t have the things that we have, and so we must do our best to help them too.

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# Idea 3

**Preparation**

Have access to a bucket and some heavy objects – stones, books etc.

**Introduction**

Ask for a volunteer to come and hold the empty bucket for you.

Ask the children if they ever get worried about things e.g. homework. Allow them to answer.

After each example, put a heavy object in the bucket. Keep filling the bucket until whoever is holding it is struggling to lift it.

Explainthat sometimes there are so many things going on in our lives and we have so many worries that it all becomes too much. But we are not on our own.

At this point, ask another volunteer to come and lift an object out of the bucket. Keep doing this until the bucket has only one object left.

Say to the children “look what happens if we share our worries. If we all take a little bit, then they don’t weigh us down.”

**Bible Bit**

Read Philippians 2:4-5 with the children. The passage below is taken from the International Children’s Bible.

*“Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others. In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.”*

**Application**

Explain that in this passage Paul is writing a letter to the people in Philippi. He was encouraging them to stop being selfish and to look out for others. Everyone has times when they are sad or worried or have something they can’t deal with on their own. When we don’t help people who are weighed down by their worries it makes their life much harder – the way the bucket got heavier. But when we all take a little bit of the load, it gets a little easier. In the passage we just read, Paul is explaining how important it is to help each other.

When Jesus lived on earth, he helped lots of people and he did this because he wanted to show them that God loves them. When we love Jesus and say we follow Him, it means that we try to obey the things He asks us to do and live by His example. It means that if we see someone, not just people we know, but anyone who is sad, or lonely, or suffering in any way we must try to help them. This includes people who live close by, or very far away. There are lots of people around the world who don’t have the things that we have, and so we must do our best to help them too.

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