

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

29. GOD'S TENT

Bible Base:

Key Christian Belief: God wants His people to worship Him.

Aim: To help children understand that God wants to be part of our everyday lives.

You will need:

- the attached PowerPoint (adapted for your area)

Introduction

You will need to identify a famous person who once lived in the vicinity of the school. If possible, find pictures of the house where they lived - or of any local streets, buildings or parks named after them. Show the children these pictures and ask if they know who the famous person was who lived in the house or after whom the street, building or park has been named and what they were famous for.

(The example given below is suitable for schools in East Belfast. You will need to adapt it for the area in which your school is situated.)

Show the children each of the three houses pictured in the accompanying PowerPoint presentation, in turn, and ask if they know which famous person once lived there.

Give clues as follows:

1. This person lived at 16 Burren Way in the Cregagh Estate (pictured) ... has a son called Callum ... was a famous footballer ... has an airport named after him ... played for Manchester United. (George Best)
2. This person was born in a house called Little Lea at 76 Circular Road (pictured) ... became a famous author ... wrote a series of seven books for children ... one was called The Magician's Nephew ... they were set in the land of Narnia. (CS Lewis)
3. This person lived at 125 Hyndford Street ... is known as 'The Man' ... is a famous singer / songwriter ... plays the saxophone ... wrote a song about Cyprus Avenue ... had a hit with Brown Eyed Girl. (Van Morrison)

Point out that all these famous people once lived in East Belfast - where we live. We can still visit the houses in which they lived when they were children and there are plaques there to remind us that they once lived here as one of us!

Bible Story

The children of Israel had come safely across the Red Sea and were now living in the desert. They didn't have houses to live in; instead they lived in tents - and as they made their way through the desert towards the land that God had promised, they had to carry their tents with them, taking them down each morning and setting them up again each evening at the end of a day's journey.

But now God told Moses that since He was their God and they were His people, He wanted a tent to live in too! And He gave Moses instructions about what it was to look like and how it was to be made.

It was to be made of the finest cloth and it was to have furnishings of gold, silver and bronze. It was to be made by the most skilled and experienced craftsmen. Nothing but the best would do for God.

Show the picture of God's Tent from the attached PowerPoint presentation and explain that when people came here to worship God, they had to stay in the outer part of the tent; they were not allowed into the inner part. Only the priests were allowed in there. The inner part was divided in two by a curtain and only the High Priest was allowed behind the curtain - and even he was only allowed to go in there once a year, bringing the blood of an animal sacrificed to pay for the wrong things the people had done.

Exploring Christian Belief

The people knew of course that the God who made heaven and earth couldn't be confined to a tent! So why did God want the people to make a tent for Him?

The Bible tells us, firstly, that it was *a reminder of God's presence*. God wanted the people of Israel to remember that He had chosen to come down and live among them. He was their God and they were His people. He was traveling with them and had promised to be their guide and to take care of them.

And so every time the people of Israel packed up their tents, they were to pack up God's tent too. And every time they put their tents up again they were to put God's tent up again too - right in the middle of the camp where everyone could see it. This would remind them that God was with them and that they could trust Him to take care of them when things were tough.

But it would also remind them that they needed to make God welcome by the things they said and did. God made it very clear that He hated all wrong things and that if they wanted Him to be with them and to take care of them they couldn't treat wrong things as if they didn't matter! They needed to get rid of all wrong things from their lives.

However, God also told them that if they ever said or did something wrong, they could come to Him, bringing an animal sacrifice to say sorry, and He would forgive them.

Secondly, the Bible tells us that *it was a place to meet with God*. God's tent became known as the Tent of Meeting. It was a place where God's people could come and meet with Him and where He had promised to meet with them.

The Bible says that Moses often went to the tent to talk to God face-to-face. There God would speak with Moses and Moses would pass on to the people all that God had said.

But it wasn't just Moses who went to the tent. People sometimes came to the tent to bring their thanks to God for what He had done for them. Sometimes they came to ask Him for His help. Sometimes they came to say sorry for the wrong things they had done. And God promised that when they did so, He would hear and answer their prayers.

Christians believe that the God of Israel is still the same today. He still chooses to come down and live among His people and He wants us to make Him welcome by the things we say and do. He still wants us to meet with Him as we spend time reading or listening to what He says in the Bible and talking to Him.

These days, because of the perfect sacrifice that Jesus has offered for us, Christians believe that we don't have to be in any special place to meet with God. We can read or listen to what He says and talk to Him anywhere. And He has promised that when we do so, wherever we are, He will be there to speak to us and to hear and answer our prayers.

Share some examples of how you make time to meet with God and what this means to you today.

Reflection & Prayer

Invite the children to think about how they might remember that God is with them and make time to meet with Him in their lives this week and finish with a prayer asking God to help them do so.