

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

54. ISAIAH

Bible Base: Isaiah 40: 25-31

Key Christian Belief: God says 'I have not forgotten you.'

Aim: To encourage children to trust God when things are tough.

You Will Need

- the attached PowerPoint presentation.
- a video clip of an eagle soaring. (see below)
- the audio track for the song 'Do You Not Know?' (see below)

Introduction

Imagine you are on your way to school one morning with your school bag packed and your school uniform on when you bump into one of your friends who doesn't seem to be dressed for school at all. In fact he is going in the opposite direction.

'Where are you going?' your friend asks you.

'To school, of course' you reply.

Your friend stares at you for a moment.

'Do you not know?' he says. 'Have you not heard? There is no school today. The headmaster told us in assembly last week. You got a letter about it to take home!'

'Oh yes' you say, remembering the letter that is still in your school bag. 'I'd forgotten that!'

You had heard and you should have known - and if you had remembered, it would have saved you from having to get up early, put your school uniform on and pack your school bag. Maybe it would have saved your mum from having to make you a packed lunch!

Or maybe you are running down the corridor one day and your teacher stops you.

'Do you not know?' she says. 'Have you not heard? NO RUNNING IN THE CORRIDORS!'

But of course you do know and you have heard - so that's you in detention over break time. If only you had remembered what you had been told and should have known!

We have been thinking about some of God's messengers and the messages God gave them for His people - the things God wanted to say to them.

'I am the true and living God' was the message He gave to Elijah. Maybe that is what God would want you to say to you.

'Stop doing wrong things and come back to me' was the message He gave to Jonah for the people of Nineveh. Maybe that is what God would want to say to you.

Or maybe this is what God would want to say to you:

Display Isaiah 40: 28a from the attached PowerPoint presentation and have the children read it with you. Explain that this was the message that Isaiah brought to the people in today's story. It was something they had heard many times before and should have known but they were acting as if they hadn't heard and didn't know.

So Isaiah says: 'Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God!'

Have the children learn this so that they can say it with you every time it comes up in the following story. You could add some actions too: E.g.

Do you not know?	(Shrug shoulders as if asking this question.)
Have you not heard?	(Cup ears.)
The Lord	(Point upwards with the index finger of both hands.)
Is the everlasting God	(Make spirals with your index fingers moving away from each other in opposite directions.)

Bible Story

The people of Israel had been captured by their enemies. They had been forced to leave their own country and go wherever the king of Babylon sent them. They hated having to leave their own country. They hated having to do what the king of Babylon told them. But they were prisoners. What could they do?

They had been prisoners now for nearly seventy years and all hope of returning to their own country was gone.

'What has happened to God's promise?' they wondered. 'Didn't He say that He would always be our God and we would always be His people? Well, where is He now? Why hasn't He come to rescue us?'

Of course they knew very well that the reason they had been captured was because they had turned away from God and had stopped obeying His laws. God had told them over and over again that this was what would happen - but they hadn't listened. They were learning the hard way that they couldn't just behave as they liked and expect God to be there for them every time they needed Him.

So was this the end of God's promise? Had he forgotten His people? Had he decided that He would no longer be their God; that they would no longer be His people? Were they stuck in Babylon forever? Would they never be able to return home?

It was as they were thinking this way that Isaiah brought them this message.

'Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God!'

What did it mean?

'Well' said Isaiah. 'Look up into the sky on a dark night when the sky is clear and what do you see? Hundreds and millions of stars of course!'

Display the picture of the stars.

Ask the children if they have ever looked up into the sky on a clear night and seen the stars. Have they ever been to the Planetarium? Do any of them know the names of any constellations (groups of stars)?

Explain that when you look into the sky, the stars look like little dots. If you were to join them together, like in dot-to-dot, you could make some pictures - like these.

Show the pictures from the attached PowerPoint presentation and explain that these groups of stars (constellations) are named after the pictures you could make if you joined them together. If you study the night sky carefully enough you might be able to find these groups of stars for yourself. Why not ask someone who knows where to look to help you get started?

As well as the stars, of course, you can see the eight planets that travel around our sun. (NB: Pluto is no longer regarded as a planet.) Now ask the children if any of them could come up to the front and name all eight? Award a prize (a Milky Way or a Galaxy) to the first one who can do so!

Comment on how impressive that was. But according to Isaiah, God knows the names of all the planets and all the stars in every galaxy throughout the universe. How awesome is that? He knows them because he made them. He hasn't forgotten one of them. Not one of them is missing. He made them at the beginning of time and to this day He continues to look after them and to keep every single one in exactly the right place.

So if you think He has forgotten you, think again. The Bible says that the God who knows every single star by name and has not forgotten one of them, has not forgotten you either. The God who knows exactly where each star is, knows where you are too - and what you are going through. He has not forgotten you.

And if you think He has grown tired or weary, think again too. The God who looks after the stars and keeps them all in place is well able to look after you too. Don't you know? He is the everlasting God. He never grows tired and He never grows weary. Christians believe He is still the same today as He has always been. His wisdom, His love and His power will never end!

Even though we have disobeyed Him, even though things can seem hopeless sometimes remember, God has not forgotten you. And neither has He grown tired and weary. So if we trust in him there is no need to worry, no need to fret, no need to panic. Don't give up. Just wait and see what He will do.

And in the meantime, says Isaiah, the One who never grows tired or weary can give you all the strength you need to get through this difficult time. Those who put their hope and trust in Him will find all the strength they need to keep going just as an eagle finds strength to soar from the wind beneath its wings.

You could play the clip of an eagle soaring from <https://www.google.co.uk/search?q=eagle+soaring&source=lnms&tbm=vid&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjO-bKC68TVAhX>

If you put your hope and trust in God, says Isaiah, you can learn to soar through difficult times just like that. God can give you all the strength you need. What a great promise!

Exploring Christian Belief

The people of Israel were going through a tough time. They were stressed and anxious. Many of them had given up hope and that's why Isaiah says to them:

'Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God!'

They had been told this many times and should have known - but they were acting as if they had never heard and didn't know.

Maybe some of us here this morning are stressed and anxious about something. Maybe we have given up hope. If that is the case, I believe God wants you to know that He is the everlasting God. He has not forgotten you. He never grows tired and He never grows weary. The Bible says that if you put your hope and trust in Him, He will give you the strength you need to cope with whatever it is you are going through. That was His message to His people in Isaiah's time. Perhaps it is His message to someone here this morning? Let's say it one more time...

'Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God!'

Song

Finish with the song 'Do You Not Know' which is based on Isaiah 40: 28. It comes from the album 'Kids Praise Party 3' by Spring Harvest and you can find it on iTunes.

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Prayer

Finish with a prayer thanking God that He is the everlasting God and asking Him to help the children put their hope in Him and find strength to soar when things are tough.