

Being an ambassador

An all age service

Aim

to share the good news of Jesus and to inspire people to pass the good news on!

Bible 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Background

Paul's relationship with the church in Corinth was a rocky one. Since its foundation, the people there had got things very wrong, and Paul was trying to put them right. In this part of his second letter to the Corinthians, he reminds the church of the message that first set up the church – the good news of Jesus. If someone follows Christ, they are a new creation and the past is gone. Moreover, if we follow Christ, we join God in his great mission to tell others this message of forgiveness and love. We can't all be like Paul, moving from place to place proclaiming the gospel. Rather, most of us are being called to pass the message on in our communities, workplaces and families. This is something we can all do – be an ambassador for Christ (verse 20).

Welcome

Before the service, come up with a range of messages that need translating, together with help to translate them – you could use braille, different languages, Morse code, semaphore or simple codes. Arrange the different codes and languages around your meeting space. As people arrive, invite them to go around and try to translate the languages and crack the codes to find the messages within. Encourage the congregation to help each other.

The messages you use aren't important – they could be clues to the location of some sweets/small prizes! One of the messages should be 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Introduction

Gather people together and invite them to sit down. Ask the congregation what messages they managed to decipher. Go on to ask what they think the most important message was. Read out 2 Corinthians 5:17, as a glorious opening to your service:

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!'

Explain that this is what Jesus came to do, to mend the relationship between God and us. Jesus never did anything wrong, but God treated him like a sinner so that Jesus could make us acceptable to God.

Songs

Sing some songs together about the reconciliation Jesus has brought about, such as 'I stand amazed (How marvellous!)' or 'Reconciled'.

Confession

As a response to God's call to be reconciled to him, we need to say sorry for the things that we have done. Use a confessional prayer that your congregation is familiar with, or put this one on a PowerPoint presentation for everyone to say together:

Father God

Thank you that you love us so much.

We are sorry that we have gone our own way and spoiled the friendship we have with you.

Thank you for sending Jesus to repair that relationship.

Thank you for sending Jesus to show us the way back to you.

Thank you for your kindness and forgiveness.

Help us to live your way and stay close to you.

Amen.

As a proclamation of God's forgiveness and love, read out these verses from the Contemporary English Version:

'Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new. God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between himself and us, and he has given us the work of making peace between himself and others'
(2 Corinthians 5:17–18, CEV).

Bible reading

Read (or ask a volunteer to read) 2 Corinthians 5:14–20. Use the NIV or a more child-friendly translation, such as the CEV or Good News Bible.

All age talk

Remind the congregation about the messages they had to translate. Which ones were the best ones – which would they tell someone else about? Put the following onto a PowerPoint presentation, one statement per slide, then ask the congregation to stand up if they would tell someone else about this message:

50% off sale at IKEA!

All-you-can-eat buffet happening at the church next weekend!

Taylor Swift is getting married to Harry Styles!

Government announces 10p tax cut!

Arsenal to sign Lionel Messi and Ronaldo!

Research is published that says chocolate is good for you!

Judi Dench to star as the new Spider-man!

Comment that some messages are so good that they are worth passing on, and some aren't. Point out that different people stood up at different times. We all have different opinions, characters and interests, and so would be excited about different things happening.

Put up this statement on your PowerPoint:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Say you've heard this before several times this morning. It's from a letter that Paul, a friend of Jesus, sent to his friends in a place called Corinth. It's an amazing message, much more than tax cuts, new signings and any health-giving properties of Dairy Milk.

After he met Jesus, Paul's life was transformed from a man who hated Christians to someone that travelled all over the place, telling everyone about Jesus. (If you have one, show a map of Paul's journeys on your screen.) He was shipwrecked, arrested, stoned, put in prison, attacked and probably, in the end, killed because of this message. To Paul, this message, that Jesus had mended the friendship between us and God, and that we could be transformed by being friends with God, was more important than his life.

Show this next verse on screen:

'We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God' (2 Corinthians 5:20, NIV).

Paul is acting as Jesus' ambassador, passing on Jesus' message of forgiveness and re-creation on to his friends in Corinth. We can be Jesus' ambassador too. There are people all around us who don't know this life-changing message of Jesus. What can we do about it?

Response

Hand out pieces of paper and pens to the people in the congregation and ask them to think about where they spend their time – at school? Home? Work? College?

Encourage them to reflect on the people they meet.

Do these people know the amazing message that Paul was telling his friends in Corinth about? If not, how can we tell them?

Ask everyone to write the name of the place where they might be an ambassador for Christ in the middle of the paper. Then, around the edge, challenge them to come up with ways in which they can naturally tell others about Jesus. What can they do to show others the love and forgiveness that Jesus brings?

Encourage parents and carers to help their children, and for people to share their ideas with those around them. Invite one or two volunteers to come to the front to share their ideas with the whole church family.

Songs

Continue your response time by singing songs about being a witness for Jesus, such as 'One shall tell another (Wine of the Kingdom)', 'Shout to the north' or 'We want to see Jesus lifted high'.

Challenge

Give out copies of Right Where You Are (for adults and young people) and Every Day, Everywhere (for children).

Challenge everyone to use the booklet this week to help them be ambassadors for Christ. Point out there are reflections for them to use every day and ways to help them come up with more ideas to pass on this great message of God's love and reconciliation.

Commissioning

Pray for the congregation as they strive to be ambassadors this week, and into the future:

Father God

Thank you for sending Jesus to bring us back to you.

Help us to tell others this amazing message of hope and love this week.

Give us courage to be ambassadors for you,
to take chances and be bold!

Amen.

Remind the church to come back next week with stories of how they got on!

CONFIDENT

COMPASSIONATE

CREATIVE



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LONDON