Lesson ideas and suggestions for teaching 9- to 11-year-olds about faith in action

Curriculum links

Religious Education
- What is faith and what difference does it make?
- How do the beliefs of Christians influence their actions?

PSHE & Citizenship
- Preparing to play an active role as citizens
- Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people

Resources

Downloadable:
- Faith in Action - PowerPoint presentation
- Faith in Action - activity sheet

Optional:
- Frontline DVD - available from Schools & Colleges Unit, contact details below
- True/false cards to hold up

For advice or help with any of the resources mentioned, phone or email the Schools & Colleges Unit, Monday to Friday 8.30am-5.00pm (details below)

Welcome session and starter - What is faith?

We are going to be thinking today about what it means for members of The Salvation Army to put their faith into action - but what is faith? Has anybody got any ideas? (Allow time for responses.) It says in the Bible that:

‘Faith means being sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it.’ (Hebrews 11:1, New Century Version)

Let’s think about this a bit more... faith is being sure of something even though we cannot see it. What or who do you think Christians have faith in? (Allow time for responses which may include the existence of God, the fact that Jesus lived on this earth, the assurance that the Bible is true, the promise of eternal life in Heaven and more). Faith can also be used to describe beliefs and following the teachings and example of something or someone.

Who or what do you have faith in? We are going to find out. As I read these true or false statements, I want you to decide whether or not you have faith in these situations and then you can decide whether the statement I make is true or false.

I believe that David Cameron is the right person to be our Prime Minister
I believe that the England football team will qualify for the next European championships
I believe that my parents will never give me anything to eat that I don’t like
I believe that my teacher will give us a weekend free from homework sometime soon!
I believe that it is safe to walk to my friend’s house on my own

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Even though we cannot be entirely sure whether these things will happen or not, we have faith or believe one way or another. The same can be said for Christians and members of The Salvation Army. Although they cannot see God, or Heaven or the people who wrote the Bible, they have faith that they exist and live their lives in response to this. We call this faith in action, putting into practice what we believe, and today we are going to be finding out how members of The Salvation Army do this.

**Main teaching and activities**

**Activity 1 - Why and how do members of The Salvation Army put faith into action?**

We have already learnt that members of The Salvation Army are Christians and believe in God but I wonder how they put these beliefs (or their faith) into action? Does anybody know about the kind of work that The Salvation Army is involved in? The Bible teaches members of The Salvation Army about the importance of putting faith into action - doing something about what you believe in. These verses are words that Christians believe Jesus said to his followers when he lived here on this earth and they are taken from the book of Matthew:

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Matthew 22:36-39, New International Version).

Members of The Salvation Army follow this commandment to love God with all their heart, soul and mind and then to love others as they would like to be cared for.

Looking at this PowerPoint presentation, I wonder if you can guess the ways that The Salvation Army puts faith into action. As we look at the images, I am going to give you a minute or so in pairs to discuss what you think the picture shows and then we will see how many of you got it right. (Use the PowerPoint and allow time for the children to respond in pairs. Pause when you reach the statistics slide at the end.)

This final slide tells us a lot about what is happening in the UK & Ireland and how The Salvation Army is at work. Which of those facts surprise you? Which programmes were you already aware of? Using one example, explain how this project/programme is caring for others.

(Pupils could write down the statistics in their books or create a diary entry to show some of the programmes a Salvation Army worker may be involved in within a day. Check out www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kids and go to the factfiles section to see a ‘day in the life’ example of how a Salvation Army officer or minister puts faith into action.)

**Activity 2 - Frontline DVD**

For Upper Key Stage 2 children (10/11 year-olds), you may want to consider using the ‘Frontline’ DVD. This is a 17-minute DVD showing different examples of the work of The Salvation Army such as street work, prison ministry and work with young people and the elderly. This is available to order from the Schools & Colleges Unit (contact details below).

**Activity 3 - Activity sheet**

Download the Faith in Action activity sheet for the children to complete, either in class or for homework. Contact us if you are unsure of any of the answers!
Reflection - How can we put our beliefs into action?

We have found out a lot about the work of The Salvation Army and how and why its members put their faith into action, but I would like us to think about how we can put our beliefs or faith into action as well. You may not have faith in God, you may have other religious beliefs or none at all, but I’m sure that there are things that you are passionate about and we can think about how we can make a difference in our local communities and the wider world.

What kind of things do you feel strongly about? (Allow for responses.) What annoys or frustrates you? You may feel like you can’t make a difference to big issues such as poverty, climate change or environmental issues but there are always small things that we can do to help.

We are going to reflect on those things that we believe in and think about what we can do to put these beliefs into action. Perhaps you could hold a fundraising event for an international project or help a friend who you know is struggling to do his or her homework. Anything is possible and everything, whether big or small, can make a difference.

(Encourage the children to reflect on a way that they want to make a difference and how they could do this. Perhaps each person could make a pledge to do something about it and place it somewhere obvious to remind them or take it around with them wherever they go.) Examples could include:

I get really worried when I see other children living in poverty across the world so I am going to give money to a charity/send a Christmas box of toys/hold a fundraising event.

I don’t think it’s fair when my friend is picked on by the other children in our class so I am going to make sure he knows I’m there to talk to/ask them to stop/stick up for him when they are bullying him.

Our street is really messy and covered with litter so I am going to organise a clean-up with my family/write to our local council and ask for more waste bins/put up signs to ask people to take their litter home with them.

Plenary

We are going to reflect on what we have learnt today and I would like you to look at these sentences (perhaps you could put them up on a whiteboard, flip chart or large piece of card) and think about how you would complete them. We will discuss each one in turn and you can respond with your answer if you would like to:

One thing I have learnt is...
One thing I didn’t realise is...
I am surprised that The Salvation Army does/doesn’t...
I will put my beliefs into action by...

Follow-up ideas

• Invite a local Salvation Army minister to lead an assembly or lesson on the work of The Salvation Army or a particular area that you are interested in. Contact us for details of your local church/centre.
• Check out our website for kids at www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kids and learn more about The Salvation Army and its international projects and use our interactive game Journo's Journey with your class. You can also download fundraising ideas and encourage the class to put belief into action by raising money for a project.

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