



PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Bible telegraph Spreading the word and praising God in Psalm 67

Suitable for Whole School

Aims

To compare modern and ancient methods of communicating the good news.

Preparation and Materials

- Display the following words from Psalm 67.2-5 (TLB):
- ‘Send us around the world with the news of your saving power and your eternal plan for all mankind.
How everyone throughout the earth will praise the Lord.
How glad the nations will be, singing for joy because you are their King and will give true justice to their people!
Praise God, O World!’
If possible, have a live e-mail connection displayed, too - see Step 6. Agree with a small group of people that you will be sending them the above Psalm by e-mail. Have their addresses listed as a 'group' so that you can send six, seven or more e-mails by clicking just one button.
- Also, or if e-mailing is not possible, borrow three or four mobile phones for the duration of the assembly that you have arranged with their owners can be used to send a text - see Step 7. Put the numbers of these phones on separate pieces of card and organize for three or four helpers to help you as described in Step 7, practising beforehand to ensure that they are happy sending the messages and so everything goes smoothly in the assembly.
- Create a display of a variety of 'message' writing or sending items, such as a notepad, a letter, a copy of a telegram, if possible.
- Place a cross and a candle on a table located centrally and in view.

Assembly

1. Start by talking and asking questions about modern methods of communication. What are they? How reliable are they? Are they speedy? Accurate and informative? Problem-free?
2. Compare these with those available 100 years, 500, 1,000 years ago.
3. Discuss the benefits of modern technology - for example, important news travels fast, emergencies can be dealt with quickly, everyone feels 'in touch', people feel they can be near loved ones even if they are far away.
4. Ask if there are any downsides to this technology and way of life - for example, never feeling able to 'get away' or switch off for quiet moments,

that it's difficult to distance oneself from the 'I'll just phone . . .' syndrome, messages can be misleading or confusing, the pace of life is too fast.

5. Early Christians spread their faith and beliefs throughout the world over hundreds of years. They had to travel great distances and could only rely on word of mouth and written sources, which involved a lengthy process most of the time. Imagine how quick and easy things might have been for them if they'd had modern technology then.
6. Type Psalm 67 as an e-mail message on the display you have set up, if using, and explain that you have created a 'group' address, which will allow you to send the e-mail to several people at one time . . . at the touch of just *one* button.
7. Also, or instead of the e-mails, give the borrowed mobile phones to your helpers, each with a card with the number of one of the other phones on it so that they can send texts to each other.

Ask the helpers to text 'God is great' (or some other appropriate message, as agreed in the practice session). They should do this as quickly as they can.

8. The psalmist in the Old Testament urges people to share the joyful news of the 'saving power' of God and the 'eternal plan for all mankind'. What an amazing message for believers - they would certainly want to share it with as many people as possible and as fast and as far as they are able!

We must also remember, however, that speed isn't everything. Personal conviction and belief in the message is very important. The psalmist maybe would think that the 'Bible telegraph' will be supported by the believers 'singing for joy' and praising the Lord 'throughout the earth. So, despite texting and e-mailing being very clever and useful, sometimes great news and real human emotions can only be passed on in person.

Time for reflection

Place the mobile phones around the foot of the cross. Think about the value of modern technology, keeping us in touch with each other.

Light the candle. Remember, too, the importance of human warmth and contact, which is part of the joy of communication.

Think about sending an important message to someone you care about. What would you say? Would you tell them next time you saw them? Is it easier in person? More difficult? Why?



Prayer

Dear Lord,

Christians around the world celebrate your greatness and love for the entire human race.

You provide for all, care for all and treat all with justice and truth.

Help the message of your eternal plan be spread around the whole Earth.

Amen.

Follow-up activity

1. Find out about how Christianity was spread by the first Christians.
2. Read some of the letters recorded at the end of the New Testament by the disciples and Early Christians.
3. Find out about Christian organizations, such as the Scripture Union, Bible Society and so on. How do they promote Christianity in the twenty-first century and using modern technology?
4. Design a poster that shows why Christians believe God is great!

Song / Music

'You shall go out with joy!' (*Come and Praise*, 98)

Publication date: July 2014