

# Come and see!

A school assembly (or all-age talk) for Education Sunday 2008

*This assembly/talk has a Christian focus, and would work best in a church school. However, it could easily be adapted for use in other schools and settings.*

Welcome and introductions

## Seeing things differently

Use the accompanying PowerPoint presentation of optical illusions and the questions below to help pupils interact with each image.

1. Look at the image – are the lines parallel/equal width all the way along?
2. What do you see? (goblet/faces)
3. What do you see in this picture – an old lady or a young woman?
4. Look straight at the image – which circles are rotating?
5. What do you see – arches or stairs?
6. How many people can you see in the picture? (There should be nine!)

Some of you were able to see things in the images you saw, and others weren't. It seems a little unfair, doesn't it! It can be so frustrating when you really want to see something but you just can't. It doesn't matter how much other people try to describe it to you, it's just not the same as actually seeing and experiencing it for yourself.

*This activity may exclude pupils with a visual impairment, so if necessary use an alternative activity which focuses on the different ways in which people 'see' things by using their other senses. You may like to have pupils guess what different items are by using only taste, touch, smell or hearing. Explain that there are many different ways of 'seeing' and finding out things. When we use the words 'I see' sometimes we're not talking about sight at all but actually about understanding something new.*

## Come and see

I want you to imagine a scene. You're hanging around the house and you've just discovered something exciting. Perhaps you've found a really unusual creature in your garden, or there's something on TV which is really amazing, or you've just discovered you can juggle with carrots (add your own examples!). You run to tell your mum or dad, or your brother or sister, urging them to come and see what you've found or done, and they say 'I'm a bit busy at the moment, but it sounds lovely', or 'not right now, tell me about it later', but the moment has passed. Has that ever happened to you?

There are some things that can only be experienced properly by someone, if they leave what they're doing and actually come and see for themselves, however inconvenient that might be.

Do you know, in a way, the Christian faith started with the words 'Come and see'. I'm going to read you part of the story from the Bible where these words appear. It's in John's Gospel – his version of the events of Jesus' life - and it's the story of Jesus meeting and choosing his disciples or followers.

## Read John 1:35-50 (Contemporary English Version, selected verses)

The next day, John (the Baptist) was there again, and two of his followers were with him. When he saw Jesus walking by, he said, 'Here is the Lamb of God!' (This is a symbolic name sometimes used for Jesus.) John's two followers heard him, and they went with Jesus.

When Jesus turned and saw them, he asked, 'What do you want?'

They answered, 'Rabbi, where do you live?' The Hebrew word 'Rabbi' means 'Teacher'.

Jesus replied, 'Come and see!' It was already about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him and saw where he lived. So they stayed on for the rest of the day.

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. There he met Philip, who was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter. Jesus said to Philip, 'Come with me.'

Philip then found Nathanael and said, 'We have found the one that Moses and the Prophets wrote about. He is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.' Nathanael asked, 'Can anything good come from Nazareth?'

Philip answered, 'Come and see.'

I wonder what would have happened if those men who became Jesus' disciples had heard Jesus say 'Come and see' and replied, 'Sorry I can't come right now, I'm off to catch some fish', or 'Err, I'm rather busy at the moment, perhaps another time?'

It's quite amazing that those first followers of Jesus were ready to go with him, just like that. They must have thought that Jesus was someone quite extraordinary to leave what they were doing and follow him. They called him 'Rabbi', which showed that they already knew he was a great teacher, and they obviously wanted to learn from him.

Millions of Christians since that time have made that same decision to follow Jesus - to come and see for themselves and to learn from his teaching and his example.

### Education Sunday

This Sunday (adapt as necessary) is Education Sunday, the day when all Christians, no matter what denomination they belong to, celebrate and thank God for education, for the gift of learning.

We don't always think of learning and education as a gift. When we have to get up early for school, when we're under pressure with exams and tests, or doing a subject we don't really enjoy, it can feel like a real pain! But as humans we have amazing potential to learn and in fact we never stop learning all through our lives.

We don't just learn from teachers. We can also learn from our parents, grandparents, brothers or sisters, friends, as well as important people from history, celebrities, the media etc.

For Christians Jesus is the ultimate teacher. They follow his teachings and example and they ask him to live within them and guide them. There are all kinds of people who inspire us and people we can learn from, so today let's remember that education and the ability and potential we all have to learn *are* gifts.

Also, let's try not take for granted the fact that education is free to us in this country, a basic human right which we can enjoy, and let's also remember people living in countries where they can't get an education, because it costs too much, or is just not provided.

## Prayer

*The following prayer can be read aloud by you or, even better, by one or more pupils.*

Dear Lord Jesus,

Thank you for the gift of learning. We are grateful for all those people who inspire us, teach us, and help to shape our lives. Today, we pray that we will make the most of our education. Thank you for putting inside each person a great potential to learn, to change and to grow, the potential to know and understand more, and to keep on learning throughout our whole lives.

We think of other people, children and adults, who are being denied an education because of the country they were born in, because of poverty, or unfair rules or corrupt leaders. We pray that through prayer and campaigning, as well as through the decisions and actions of world leaders, this situation will change.

As we sit in our lessons today give us the desire to learn. Please help us to be willing to 'come and see' in the way that your first disciples were, to be open to new ideas, and to be excited about the possibilities that exist in us. Most of all, teach us to respect and love each other and to learn from your example in the way we live out our lives.

Amen.

