

Together in South Africa Campaign Assembly



LEADER'S NOTES

These notes accompany the Together in South Africa assembly and provide the information you need to present the assembly to children.

This assembly has been prepared by Mission Together, which is the children's branch of Missio – the Pope's official charity for overseas mission. 96% of money raised by children for Mission Together goes towards our work supporting children overseas.

While all projects are supported by the Catholic Church, Mission Together follows Christ's example – helping everyone in need, regardless of background or belief.

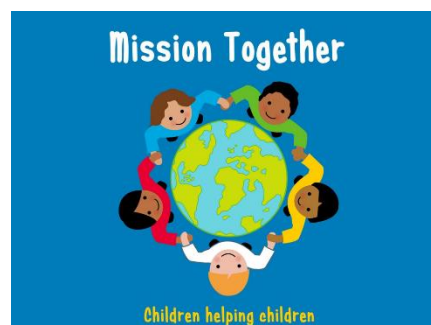
SLIDE ONE

Welcome to your Mission Together assembly. This picture is the Mission Together logo.

Ask the children if they can explain what the logo means.

Invite suggestions and guide answers to the following:

The logo shows children holding hands around the world. They are wearing different colours to show they are from different places. But even though they live far apart, they can still be friends and work together.



Ask the children what the word 'mission' means.

A mission is an important task or job. We all have a special mission from God: to help others and share God's love with them. When we do this, we become missionaries.

'Mission Together' means we can do the special job of being missionaries together, not just as a school but with children everywhere.

Just like the children holding hands in the logo, through Mission Together, children all around the world work together and help other children, no matter how far away they are.

That's why our motto is 'children helping children'.

SLIDE TWO

Ask the children if they can say who the person on screen is.

It's Pope Francis.

Mission Together is the Pope's own children's charity.

Pope Francis has sent a special message of encouragement to you and children around the world.

He said, 'Dear young people, always be missionaries... Jesus wants you to spread the joy of his friendship everywhere.'

Ask the children how they could do this.

Today, Mission Together is inviting you to respond to Pope Francis through praying and sharing to help other children.

Can you be generous with your time, your love, and your prayers?

We know that you can be, because for many years children in England and Wales have been praying and sharing to help children all around the world; in the Philippines, in Zambia, India, Malawi, Sri Lanka, and last year in Jordan.



SLIDE THREE

Last year, Mission Together asked schools like yours to help refugee children living in Jordan.

Pupils heard about Sandra who attends Marka School for Refugees, where she and all the Marka pupils are given help they need to learn and grow up to be healthy and happy.

Because the children fled their homes in a hurry they arrived in Jordan with very few belongings, so Marka School provides the children with books, stationery, food and drink.

When the school asked Mission Together to help pay for these things, we knew children in England and Wales would work together to achieve this mission!

And you did! Together you raised just under £60,000.

That's enough to buy a daily drink and a snack for all the children at Marka School for two years!

For all your hard work, we want to say a huge 'thank you!'



SLIDE FOUR

Now let's see where our mission is going to be this year...

Invite a child to identify where we are on the map.

[Click once to reveal Big Ben.](#)

This is Big Ben in London and this plane will take us where we need to be.

[Click to start plane animation ...](#)

[Click again to reveal title South Africa.](#)

South Africa is just over 6,000 miles away and if we were on a real plane, it would take us 11 hours to fly there.

Ask the children what they think South Africa is like.

What animals do they think live there?

[Click to reveal South Africa map.](#)

South Africa is a huge country - 5 times the size of the UK. It's so big it has 11 languages!

South Africa has many big cities, like Johannesburg. But it also has miles and miles of open countryside, some of which has been turned into nature reserves. People visit these reserves from all over the world to see wild animals like lions and giraffes roam free, and to admire the scenery.

Let's see where we will visit.

[Click for arrow](#) to show Mpumalanga (pronounced OOM-PUMA-LANGA)



SLIDE FIVE

Some of South Africa's most famous nature reserves are in Mpumalanga. As well as lions, giraffes, and other wild animals, Mpumalanga has some of the oldest mountains in the world, made up of rock that's over 3.5 billion years old!

Mpumalanga is very beautiful, but it's a difficult place to live. There aren't enough jobs for the adults so some families have little money to buy food. Many homes do not have running water or electricity. Some people can't afford brick homes. They live in shelters made with sheets of metal and wood.

[Click twice for images of shack dwellings.](#)

Ask the children if they can imagine life without running water from a tap and light from a light switch.



It is not easy to stay healthy in such harsh conditions. Parents who are sick struggle to care for their children and it is even harder if everyone in the family is unwell, too. Many children are born with an infection which means that their bodies cannot fight diseases.

Some of these children live in a special home, where they are helped to stay healthy. We're going to visit one of these homes and meet some of the children who live there.

Teachers' Notes: *South Africa has the world's biggest HIV/AIDS epidemic with 7.1 million people living with the disease (12.5 % of the population). Poor living conditions, malnutrition and overcrowding mean that the success of treatment is low. Although HIV/AIDS does not kill, it weakens the immunity system, making sufferers more susceptible to other illnesses such as cancer and tuberculosis (TB). TB is the biggest single killer in South Africa today.*

SLIDE SIX

This is Johannes, he is 11 and lives with 29 other children in St John's Care Centre.

[Click for photograph of the Sisters.](#)

Johannes and all the children are cared for and loved by a special group of Religious Sisters: Sr Denise, Sr Anece and Sr Fran (left to right in the photo).

Ask the children if they know what a Religious Sister is.

A Religious Sister is a woman who leaves her family and friends to live with other Religious Sisters. They dedicate their whole life to loving God and helping others. They pray together and do what they can to help people in practical ways so that everybody might know how much God cares for us.

The Sisters at St John's left their homes in America and Europe and came to South Africa many years ago to share God's love with the people of Mpumalanga. Because of this they are also known as Missionary Sisters.

A Missionary is someone sent out with the important job of sharing God's love around the world.

The Sisters have been looking after the children at St John's for so long that they are like grandmothers. Sr Anece is often called 'Ugogo', which in Mpumalanga means Grandma!

The Sisters are doing what Jesus taught. They are building a special kind of family at St John's - God's family, where everyone is loved and valued.



SLIDE SEVEN

Most of the children at St John's must take medicine every day. Otherwise, they would get very sick.

Ask the children to raise their hands if they've ever been unwell.

Ask if anyone went to see the doctor. Did they get some medicine?



Most of us will go to the doctor at some time and take medicine to make us feel better.

Then ask the children if they can remember how being sick made them feel?

Maybe they didn't feel like eating anything or they didn't want to go out to play. Perhaps they even stayed off school. When we are sick we want to stay at home and be quiet and sleep.

Rest and sleep are very important ways for our bodies to heal and stay healthy. Sleep allows the children at St John's to keep well.

Eating healthy foods is also important. The Sisters have taught the children that to stay healthy they must eat lots of fresh fruit and food with lots of protein, like cheese and yogurt.

Protein helps the children build muscle and fight disease. Without protein, the medicine the children take wouldn't work as well.

Johannes' favourite food is corn porridge and cheese sandwiches (like the ones the children are eating on the slide).

Keeping fit is also important. Johannes' favourite way to stay fit is playing football. But he also just loves being outside, surrounded by nature. The Sisters have taught Johannes to love and look after the world that God created.

The Sisters also teach the children to look after one another. As the children are all different ages they help each other in different ways.

For example, at mealtimes the older children, like Johannes, help the younger ones by cutting up their food and encouraging them to finish their meals. At the end of the meal the younger children help to clear the tables.

Some who have been living at St John's for many years and are now young adults, wash the dishes and even help to cook the meals.

Ask the children how they look after classmates at school / family at home.

There are many other ways the children at St John's care for each other and the home they share.

Let's see how.

SLIDE EIGHT

This is Victor. Victor is the oldest resident. He arrived at St John's when he was a baby. The Sisters helped Victor to get better and taught him how to stay healthy.

Now Victor is old enough to help the Sisters and the children in a very special way - Sister Fran showed him how to look after St John's borehole and water tank!

Ask if anyone knows what a borehole is.



Remember at the start of the assembly when we heard how many people in Mpumalanga do not have water piped into their homes as we do. Instead they get their water from a borehole.

A borehole is a big hole that is drilled deep into the ground until fresh, clean water is found. Then a pipe is fed down the hole and a powerful pump is fitted above the ground, to move the water from underground into a big water tank.

It is an important and responsible job. Victor must check St John's pump and water tank twice a day, otherwise the pump might stop working and the children and adults would have no water!

Ask the children why it would be very bad if St John's ran out of water.

Having fresh clean water to drink and wash with prevents sickness.

SLIDE NINE

This isn't the only way Victor helps at St John's. He also helps the children with their homework and teaches them how to stay healthy and safe.

Victor enjoys helping the children so much that he wants to become a teacher when he leaves school.

The children look up to Victor. He is like their big brother. In fact, all the children are like brothers and sisters.

Although they are unable to live with their own families and parents, the Sisters help the children to build another kind of family at St John's - God's family, to which everyone on earth belongs.

The St John's family might seem different from yours, but there are many kinds of families - grandparents raise their grandchildren, aunts or uncles raise their nieces and nephews, or foster parents raise their foster children.

These are all families. What is most important is that they love and care for each other, just as Jesus asks us to do.



SLIDE TEN

Living in any kind of family can be difficult at times. Praying to God can help. God helps us to forgive, be patient and share.

So every morning and evening the Sisters and the children at St John's gather together for prayers.

Sometimes they listen to a reading from the Bible. Let's listen to one of these readings now.

Click to reveal scripture.



'God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to others; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient.

Do not be angry with each other but forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive them. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you.

Do all these things; but most important, love each other. Love is what holds you all together.'

3 Colossians 12-14 (adapted)

Ask the children what they think is the most important lesson in this reading.

Ask them if they can try to live by these lessons today and every day! Remind them to pray to God for help to do this!

SLIDE ELEVEN

Mission Together invites children around the world to see that we all belong to God's family and must work together as Jesus asked us; to share God's love most especially with those in need of help.

St John's needs our help. Sisters Anece, Denise and Fran love and care for the children every day and every night but they struggle to provide everything the children need.

So the Sisters ask for our prayers and for us to share what we can, so that they can buy:

Click to reveal image before reading out each bullet point.

- A piece of cheese a day for all 30 children - £8.50
Ask the children if they can remember why cheese is an important food for the children.
- Two pieces of fruit a day for all 30 children – £10
- A daily bowl of porridge for all 30 children for a month – £60
- A mattress for one child - £50
Ask the children if they can remember why rest and sleep are important for the children.

These things are important in keeping Johannes and his friends healthy, safe and happy. Can you make a difference and help him, and other children like him around the world?

Teachers' Note: The Sisters are required by law to provide the children with new flame retardant mattresses. Otherwise, the home is at risk of being closed.



SLIDE TWELVE

There are two very special ways in which you can help.

When Mission Together was first started, over 175 years ago, the children were asked to do two things.

Do you know what they are?

We can join our hands in prayer and we can put coins in our Mission Together red boxes to help children around the world.

Let's start our new mission by saying the Mission Together prayer as a school.

Click to reveal Mission Together Prayer.



Teachers' Note: *You might like to point out to the children that the Mission Together prayer is an acrostic, in which the first letter of each line spells out the word 'Mission'.*

Perhaps you could challenge the children to compose their own acrostic prayer today, praying for children around the world.

The Mission Together prayer is also available as a poster. For this and further resources related to our Together in South Africa campaign, and for materials throughout the liturgical year (i.e. Advent, Lent, Pentecost), please visit www.missiontogether.org.uk

If you have any questions or need any support, please ring 020 7821 9755 or email missiontogether@missio.org.uk

Glossary

Mission - an important task or job. We all have a special mission from God: to help others and share God's love with them. When we do this, we become missionaries.

Missionary - someone sent out with the important job of sharing God's love with others.

Religious Sister - a woman who leaves her family and friends to live with other Religious Sisters. They dedicate their whole life to loving God and helping others. They pray together and do what they can to help people in practical ways so that everybody might know how much God cares for us.