

# Assembly for Lent:

## *Signs of hope*

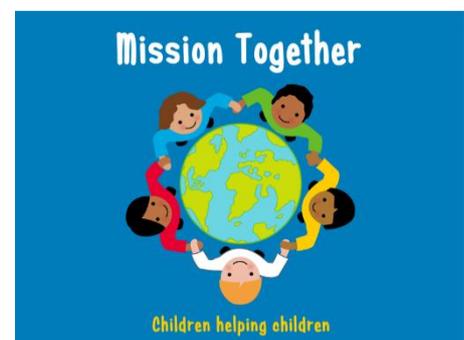


### LEADER'S NOTES

This presentation lasts up to 20 minutes. We recommend you deliver the whole assembly **but please feel free to use the material as time and circumstances allow**. This PowerPoint uses animations. It is advisable to run through the assembly before you present to your pupils.

This assembly has been prepared by **Mission Together**, the Pope's official children's charity for overseas mission. **Mission Together** is the children's branch of **Missio**. 97% of money donated to **Mission Together** by children goes directly towards work with children. Although all projects are Church-backed, we follow Christ's example – helping everyone in need, regardless of background or belief

### HOLDING SLIDE



### SLIDE ONE

Ask if any of the children can tell you the name of the flowers on the screen.

A: Snowdrops

*Click to reveal the word: **Snowdrops**.*

Ask the children to raise their hands if they have seen any snowdrops recently.



Explain to the children that snowdrops are beautiful little flowers. Although they are only small, they are also very strong and are the first flowers of the year to break through the hard, cold earth, towards the sunlight.

Because of this, snowdrops are a sign of hope. They tell us that winter is coming to a close. The sun is now beginning to shine for longer, meaning that temperatures rise. With more light and warmth, flowers and plants begin to grow again. Animals and birds also become livelier. For nature, this is a time of new beginnings.

For the followers of Jesus, this is also a special time of new beginnings.

Q: Does anyone know what Christians call this special time of year?

A: Lent.

Lent begins the day after Pancake Tuesday, on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days.

Q: Can anybody explain what Lent is for?

Lent helps us to remember the many ways in which Jesus did everything he could to help all people understand how much they are loved by God.

At the end of Lent, on Good Friday, we remember how Jesus gave up his life for us. When Jesus rose from the tomb on Easter Sunday, he helped us understand that when somebody dies we don't have to stay sad or worried, because they have gone to join Jesus in heaven, where they will live in God's love forever.

## SLIDE TWO

In Lent, Christians make a special effort to spend more time doing three things that were important to Jesus. Can anyone explain what these three things are?

[\*Click to reveal on screen.\*](#)

A: Prayer. Fasting. Sharing (acts of charity).

Fasting is an unusual word. Can anybody tell us what it means?

A: Giving up something.



**Mission Together**

In Lent we make a special effort to spend more time doing three things that were important to Jesus:

- Prayer
- Fasting
- Sharing

The slide features a blue header with the title 'Mission Together'. Below the header is an illustration of Jesus, a man with a beard and long hair, wearing a brown robe and a white sash, standing with his arms outstretched. To the right of the illustration is a list of three items: 'Prayer', 'Fasting', and 'Sharing'. At the bottom right corner of the slide, there is a small circular logo with the text 'THE GREAT COMMISSION' around the perimeter and a globe in the center.

People often 'fast' from things they enjoy in Lent, like chocolate or TV. Jesus didn't ask us to give up things because he was a spoil-sport. He was trying to encourage us to live simply and to think not always about what we want, but what others might need.

So when we fast in Lent we are encouraged to spend the money or time we save not on things we want, but on what others need.

### SLIDE THREE

*Ask for ideas about what the children might give up, and how they could use the money or time saved to help others. The examples on screen of children who have supported Mission Together, might help them come up with some ideas.*



Top left – These children give up their time to help look after their school gardens. Thanks to them everyone can enjoy the beautiful plants and flowers.

Top right – These children from St Gregory's Church asked people not to buy them presents when they made their First Holy Communion, instead they asked for people to donate money to Mission Together, to help children who live in poverty overseas.

Bottom left – These children gathered together with hundreds of other school children for a special Mission Together Mass, to pray for children living in poverty overseas.

Bottom right – This little girl is called Thia, for two weeks she gave up her free time to help clean her classroom then gave her sponsorship money to Mission Together.

Helping people makes us feel happy, even if we have to give up something we like to do so. Jesus reminded his followers of this when he told them never to look sad when they are fasting.

Let's listen to Jesus' words now.

## SLIDE FOUR

*Read the Gospel passage, or ask a pupil to read.*

**‘Jesus said, “Be careful! When you do something good, don’t do it so that others will see you. When you give to the poor, don’t tell everyone about it. And when you fast from things you enjoy, don’t look sad, put a smile on your face. Your Father in Heaven can see what you are doing and he will reward you.”’**



Ask the children what they think are the lessons Jesus is teaching us through his words?

Explain that Jesus is reminding us that we should not fast or help others just to look good in front of people. We do these things because we know we are loved by God and want to share this love with the world. Now we will hear about some children living thousands of miles away who try hard to share God’s love by fasting, charity and prayer.

## SLIDE FIVE

Let’s go to Sri Lanka! Sri Lanka is about 5,500 miles away from here and it would take us over 10 hours to get there on a plane.

Sri Lanka is an island country in Asia, off the southern coast of India. People go on holiday to Sri Lanka to visit its beautiful beaches, but many who live in Sri Lanka are too poor to visit the beaches.



## SLIDE SIX

These children live in Sri Lanka. They are Mission Together children. *(In Sri Lanka Mission Together is known as Holy Childhood).*



The children want to follow the example of Jesus and share his love with the whole world.

Every week they meet together to pray and, although they and their families have little money themselves, they give a small coin worth 10 pence, which they put towards helping children around the world who have even less than they have.

The children know that by doing little things often they can make a big difference to others living in poverty across the world.

## SLIDE SEVEN

Through their prayers, kindness and fasting, the children in Sri Lanka are 'children helping children'.

Knowing they are working together to share God's love and help others, makes the children feel happy.

They are following Jesus' instruction to smile as they share because they know their small efforts are beautiful signs of hope, like the snowdrops we see during Lent.

Could you follow the example of some of the children we've met in this assembly; through fasting, sharing, and prayer this Lent?

Maybe you could complete our Lent snowdrop activity to think of ways you can bring hope to others.



The accompanying Snowdrop Activity sheet can be downloaded via [missiontogether.org.uk/lent/](http://missiontogether.org.uk/lent/)

For more information about our project 'Together in Sri Lanka', supporting impoverished children in a Sri Lankan Tea Estate, please visit [missiontogether.org.uk/materials 2017/2018](http://missiontogether.org.uk/materials 2017/2018)

## SLIDE EIGHT

Let's end our assembly and start our Lenten actions now by saying together the **Mission Together** prayer for children like those living in Sri Lanka and around the world.

***Mission Together Prayer:***



**May all children**  
**In the world**  
**Share love**  
**Share friendship and live**  
**In the peace**  
**Of God's love.**  
**Now and forever.**  
*Amen*