

2.2 God welcomes everyone

Based on Episode 2: A Friend in High Places



Learning objectives:

- To think about who we welcome
- To know that God welcomes everyone

RE Links:

- England:** 3e) *beliefs and questions: how people's beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives*
- Isle of Man:** 5F) *How do the beliefs of Christians influence their actions? Who is my neighbour? (QCA – 5D)*
- Northern Ireland:** *Morality: respect for each other*
- Scotland:** *RME 2-01b: through exploring the lives and teachings of Jesus and other figures in Christianity, I am increasing my knowledge and understanding of key Christian beliefs*
Scotland Roman Catholic: RERC 2-21a: I can recognise how my relationship with God and others can be shaped by the values of Jesus' kingdom
- Wales:** *pupils should be taught about some spiritual and moral aspects of life and how these influence beliefs, attitudes and behaviour*

Stimulus material:

Friends and Heroes DVD Episode 2: A Friend in High Places

This lesson is based on the second half of the episode from 11:39 mins just after Rebecca talks harshly about Portia to the end.

Bible reference for the main story:

Peter's friendship with Cornelius
Acts 10:9-28

Other resources required:

Copies of Worksheet 2.2a (enough for one per pupil)
Copies of Worksheet 2.2b (enough for one per pupil)
Stickers
Hat

Introduction:

Begin by playing a game – make sure that pupils know you are in 'game-mode' perhaps by putting on a hat.

Explain that you want to start a new group for some special pupils in the class and proceed to give out stickers to certain groups of pupils e.g., give stickers to all the pupils with glasses, all the pupils wearing a certain colour socks, with a certain colour hair until only four or five pupils remain (socially robust pupils would be best!).

Explain that you have got enough children for your group now and that together you're going to be doing amazing things and that unfortunately the other pupils aren't quite the right sort of children for the group.

Return to teacher-mode (removing hat). Ask the remaining pupils how they feel. Draw out vocabulary to describe their feelings and explore the idea that a group of people can reject others for a number of different reasons e.g., hair colour, background, religion, etc. This has happened throughout history when different groups of people have felt that they were better than others for one reason or another.

Activities:

Explain that in the Bible story in today's episode of Friends and Heroes, we learn about Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, who had a dream. Peter was a Jew, and as a Jew, he wasn't allowed to mix with Romans or anyone who wasn't a Jew like him (the proper name for anyone who isn't a Jew is "Gentile"). Jews weren't supposed to visit or eat with Gentiles.

The Jews had to live amongst the Romans but the Romans, in general, didn't follow the same religion as the Jews. Most Romans worshipped many different gods not just one God like the Jews and Friends of Jesus. (Note – we know that some Romans did become Friends of Jesus. Lucius, one of the characters in the second series of Friends and Heroes, was a Roman and also a Friend of Jesus).

Ask pupils to complete the grid on Worksheet 2.2a and answer the first two questions – this gives the pupils an opportunity to think about how Peter acted because of his Jewish upbringing.

Show Friends and Heroes DVD Episode 2: A Friend in High Places from 11:39 mins, just after Rebecca talks harshly about Portia to the end.

Remind the pupils that as well as being Jewish, Peter was also a Friend of Jesus. Before the dream Peter was bound by Jewish beliefs and thinking, even though he was a Friend of Jesus, but when God spoke to Peter through the dream, Peter understood that he shouldn't treat people differently (even Romans). He decided to visit Cornelius – even though he was a Roman – and Cornelius welcomed him with open arms.

Ask the pupils to answer Questions 3 and 4 on Worksheet 2.2a to help them think about how Peter's thinking changed after the dream.

Link what the pupils have learned about Peter's dream to the Friends and Heroes story by asking the following questions:

- Why did Diana have to tell the children that particular story? (she needed Portia and Rebecca to see that God welcomes everyone, whatever their background and that God doesn't view one group of people as better than another)

- Who else in the story felt that they were better than other people? (Toadie – trying to collect the taxes)
- How does Rebecca feel about Portia? (she doesn't like her)
- Why? (Rebecca doesn't give Portia a chance because she belongs to the 'Romans group')
- What effect does this have on Portia's relationship with Rebecca? (it causes bitterness and arguments)

Ask pupils to use Worksheet 2.2b to write a reply to Rebecca who has written in to the 'Alexandria Post' for advice – see Worksheet 2.2b.

We have a song about Peter and Cornelius called 'Friends from Different Families'. You can add music and Song Time activities to your lesson using our music CD, What about Love?: Bible songs inspired by Friends and Heroes Series 1. Click here to learn more:
www.friendsandheroes.com/songtime

Reflection / Personal search / Response:

Ask pupils to think about how they welcome other people.

- Do they choose to be friendly with others based on how they look or what group they might be part of?

Tell pupils that Christians believe that God welcomes everyone, regardless of their backgrounds. Give pupils a few minutes to think about how they respond to people who need a welcome.

- Do they behave like Rebecca or are they willing to welcome others as Peter began to?

Assessment / reporting:

Can pupils give an example of when they have given someone a good welcome?

Links to other subject areas:

PSHE/SEAL links: SEAL: Getting on and falling out – forming friendships

Literacy links: Letter writing

Creative/other links: Romans – writing on a wax tablet using a stylus

Creative/other links: Prejudices

Name:

Date:



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Worksheet 2.2a

According to Peter's Jewish background: which of these things could Peter do?

| | Yes | No |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|
| Marry a Roman | | |
| Walk in the same street as a Roman | | |
| Worship at the temple with a Roman | | |
| Eat a meal with a Roman | | |

Question 1. How do you think he would have felt if a Roman had asked him to visit his house or share a meal?

Question 2. What do you think Peter's attitude to Romans was?

Question 3. How did Peter's attitude to Romans change after the dream?

Question 4. What do you think Peter now thought about going to visit a Roman or sharing a meal with one?



Name:

Date:

Worksheet 2.2b

Read this letter from Rebecca which has been printed in the 'Alexandria Post', the local newspaper.

Dear Auntie Hannah,

My best friend Joel (not his real name!) has recently made friends with a Roman girl. I can't possibly be friends with her because she's a Roman. I can't understand why Joel will speak to her, let alone spend time with her – she's a Roman after all! We all know what they're like. What shall I do?

Yours, Rebecca

*Dear Rebecca,
Thanks for your letter . . .*

