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School assemblies for every season for everyone

KS 3-4

Please call my name!

To enable students to understand that each one of us has a personal and unique calling from God *by Paul Hess*

Aims

To enable students to understand that each one of us has a personal and unique calling from God.

Preparation and Materials

- You may wish to replace the story (or the football team!) with one of your own. Any story that involves the disappointment of your name not being called (e.g. not being successful in an audition, a trial, a job interview, etc.) would be suitable.

Assembly

- Like so many boys of his age, Joe's great dream was to become a professional footballer and don the claret and blue of mighty West Ham! He played his heart out for his club - and one day he got his big break. He was invited to the under-14 county trials. Yet when the day came Joe was so nervous that he couldn't play his best football. The ball got stuck under his feet and the opposing defenders easily pushed him off the ball.

At the end of the session the coach read out the list of names of those boys to be invited back. Joe feared the worst, but was hoping against hope ...
Please call my name, please call my name, he said to himself. The coach began reading the names: 'Michael, Ed, Mark' (*for some comic and dramatic effect, you might read the names of pupils in the school at this point*).

The coach started folding up his piece of paper - he had clearly come to the last name. Joe held his breath.

‘And the final person we’d like to come back for the second trial is ... Tom!’

Joe was devastated. The consoling words of his parents had no effect on him on the journey home as the tears welled up. How he had prayed that his name would be called!

2. For each one of us it may be hugely important for our name to be called, for us to be recognized and acknowledged, to feel that we are somebody. We want to feel part of the team. When we are called by name (‘Joe, Kate, Ollie - come and be part of our group’), it feels good, we feel as if we belong.
3. And in the same way, when our name is not called, when we are left out, when nobody calls us, we can feel lonely and alienated - it can feel as if we don’t fit in, as if no one really cares. Sometimes, if we feel like that for long enough, we might even resort to being disruptive, at the back of the classroom or at home - just so that our names will be called. Poor behaviour is a pretty sure-fire way to get noticed!
4. At the very heart of the biblical message, at the very beginning of the story of faith, lies the ‘call’ of God. God calls Abraham to establish his people. God calls Moses to set his people free. God calls Paul to spread the gospel. And God calls each of them by name.

But their dramatic callings simply serve to underline the truth that we are all called - each one of us. One of the most powerful images in the Bible is the wedding banquet - that God’s kingdom is a like a feast, a party, and we are all invited, we are all called.

5. Not many of us (sadly) have a calling to become a professional footballer. But we are all called to belong to God’s family. We are called to some special task, to do something that will make the world a better place.
6. But you have never heard the call, I hear you say - you have never had a dramatic experience like Moses or Paul. The point is that we must learn to listen. God speaks through other people, through circumstances, and most of all God speaks through the language of silence.



If only we could learn to listen, we would hear God's call to each one of us.
We would find the special task that is ours to do.

Time for reflection

Reflection

'I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' (Matthew 22.4)

(You may wish to read the whole of Matthew 22.1-10.)

Silence

Prayer

Lord, open our ears, that we may hear your voice,
and open our hearts, that we may respond to your call.
Amen.

Hymn

'I the Lord of sea and sky' (*Hymns Old and New*, 324)