

# An assembly reflection: Understanding Mission



*This reflection was created to help schools celebrate the Extraordinary Month of Mission (Oct'19). It focuses on one of four EMM aims: to increase understanding of mission.*

*Before this reflection we suggest you write a greeting card for a member of your group (student or staff) that has a celebration (birthday, passed a test, etc) that week.*

Before we begin our reflection today, I have a special message for someone here.

*You could hand over the card yourself or ask a volunteer to pass it onto the student/staff member. Once given, invite the recipient to read the greeting. This should produce a positive group response. Encourage students to share in the good wishes before continuing.*

It's lovely to send a card. At times of celebration it enables us to share in someone's joy and - more importantly - to let them know that they are in our thoughts.

Hands up if you like to send cards or use other ways to send greetings e.g. social media, post-it notes.

The method by which we communicate our greeting is not that important. In fact, we may not always use words. We may bake a cake or send flowers. However we communicate, what is important is that we send out a message that lets someone know that they are thought about, valued, and loved.

Often the most special messages are sent during difficult times, during illness or after a loss. The messages we send then, can help someone remember that they're not alone and that they're supported.

We see examples of this on social media. In a short space of time, hundreds of supportive messages can be sent to someone who is suffering. These messages might even evolve into digital campaigns, when tens of thousands unite to bring about positive change.

All the messages of love and support we send with a sincere heart - in whatever form - help to build what Pope Francis calls 'a civilisation [or a culture] of love.'

Pope Francis believes there is an urgent need to create this civilisation of love. He says that all Christians and all people everywhere, should see this as their shared mission. Our global mission.

Pope Francis uses the word mission a lot. And though most of us understand mission to mean an important task or job, that's not its full definition. For this it helps to back to the original meaning of the word.

Mission comes from an ancient Latin word, *Mittere*, meaning to send.

We've heard a lot so far about the messages of love we send to others. However, the mission Pope Francis refers to is something much greater. A short Bible passage we'll hear now helps us understand why.

*'[Jesus said to his followers] You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you [gave you a mission] to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last.'* John 15:16

This reading reminds us that Jesus, who Christians believe is God, sends us into the world. The reading reminds us that although it's good to send a card, or post supportive messages on social media, this isn't enough. **We are to go out** and spend time with that friend or relative. **God is sending you!**

- In the reading we've just heard Jesus says, 'Go and bear fruit.' What do you think he meant by this?

Possible responses: Do good deeds. Produce good results. Be successful.

- Let's think about why he used the word 'fruit'. What do all fruits have that enable future fruits to grow?

Answer: Seeds.

Jesus was reminding us that when we go out and give witness to God's love in the world, we bring something good and appealing. What is more, we plant seeds. Some may follow our example, then bear their own fruit. This way, with God's grace, love spreads and goodness grows.

Every year hundreds of students in schools like yours are spreading love and growing goodness. Students like Anthony from Durham, who to support those less fortunate in his community set up a food collection in his school. He then asked the people in his village for help too. Anthony's witness has inspired students, staff, and his neighbours to get involved and support their local food bank.

Or Selina from East London, who with the help of her friends and teachers created an Eco Warriors club in her school. Inspired by her belief that 'God has given us this planet and we should protect God's gift for others', Selina and her friends are now reviewing each area of the school to improve its impact on the environment.\*

No mission is easy. It takes commitment, effort, and courage to go out and give witness to God's love. Pope Francis has a few ideas on what could help us. He says:

'Dear young people, Jesus invites us to build together the civilization of love, as His disciples and missionaries, here and now: at home, with your friends, in the situations you live every day... [Therefore, it is necessary] to encounter Him in prayer, in the Word, in the sacraments. Dedicate time, make silence to hear His voice.'

Pope Francis is reminding us that the mission to go out and build a culture of love, no matter how challenging it may be at times, is not impossible if it is shared with others and founded on God.

Jesus' example, shown in the Gospels, guides us. His friendship, gained through prayer, encourages us. His closeness, found in silence and the sacraments, strengthens us.

As we say our closing prayer, think about how Jesus is sending you into the world to share his love with others. *We suggest saying the prayer of St Francis, 'Lord, make me an instrument of your peace...'*

Fundraising is a brilliant way to involve everyone in raising money for Missio. Your support will enable missionaries to work alongside communities globally that are poor or in need, regardless of their background or belief. Below are just a couple of ideas:

**Card posting service:** The word *mission* derives from the Latin word *sent*. A great reason to set up a card posting delivery service! Charge students and teachers to have their Christmas or Valentine cards delivered by hand! Maybe you could persuade a special guest post-person to get involved.

**Care with a Cake:** Ask volunteers to bring in their bakes then invite students and staff to show someone they care by buying a cake! Add 'Care with Cake' cocktail pick flags to each bake to reinforce the message.

**Please share your fundraising events with us @missioUK adding the hashtag #missiontocare**