



Assembly



Page
1 of 2

A bunch of balloons

Aim:

To encourage pupils to adopt a positive approach to life

Introduction

A bunch of balloons

(It would be helpful to have a single, helium-filled balloon as a prop for this assembly, but the introduction can be adapted if one is not available)

I love helium-filled balloons. They seem to have a life of their own, bobbing along like an obedient dog, peering over the heads of the crowd, bringing a touch of colour to life.



I've always wondered how many of these balloons it would take to actually fly. Would it be 10 or 20, 50 or 100? Jonathan Trappe is the man with the answer. In June 2008 he took off, strapped to a chair he used in the office, under a cluster of 55 balloons. In a flight that lasted four hours he rose to a height of nearly 15,000 feet and travelled a distance of more than 50 miles. Since then he has flown above North Carolina, Indiana, Lake Michigan and Mexico. However his main target was to fly across the English Channel.

In May 2010 Jonathan took off at sunrise from Ashford in Kent and drifted out over the cold water. Three hours and 22 minutes later he landed in France, near to Dunkirk. An impossible dream had been accomplished.

Looking Deeper

Making the impossible possible

Looking at my one balloon such a trip seems impossible. It appears to be the kind of achievement that only happens in Pixar animations or (a reference here for older members of staff) French fantasy films. Jonathan Trappe didn't think so. He had an idea and he applied himself to exploring it. He became licensed as a hot-air and gas balloon pilot. He designed a safety harness for himself and rigging for the balloons. He worked with Physics principles and built models. Yet the practical work would never have started if he hadn't first of all dared to dream that the impossible might be made possible.

The life and work of Jesus was marked by a similar attitude. He took impossible situations and changed them. He made blind people see, deaf people hear, lame people walk, paralysed people move. He healed infectious diseases, controlled the forces of nature and gave hopeless men, women and children a reason and purpose to live for. He then told his followers, and that includes us, to adopt a similar attitude to life. He called it faith.

It's easy to look at situations we face in life and to see them as insuperable. We can be tempted to give up, to give in, to turn around and accept our failure. Jonathan Trappe's experience encourages us instead to believe that the possibility may be there. It may take careful thought and some hard work but we too may be able to fly (in a metaphorical sense) just like he did.



Current Affairs Assembly

KS3 Healthy Lifestyle – Mental Health

Assembly



Reflection

What worries you at this moment?

Visualise it as a physical barrier in front of you.

Grasp hold of a bunch of imaginary balloons and allow them to lift you over the barrier.

Go and do something positive to address the worry.

Prayer

God who gave Jesus the faith to make the impossible possible,
Give me a positive attitude to life and the will to see it through to the end
Amen

Thought for the day

Jesus claimed that faith could even move mountains

Keywords

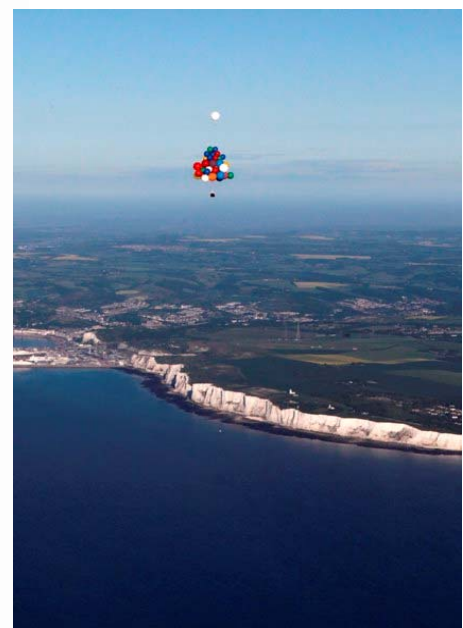
Faith

Impossible/possible

Dreaming dreams

Balloon flight

Images of Jonathan's Channel crossing and other flights can be found at www.clusterballoon.com



Jonathan Trappe during his balloon flight over the cliffs of Dover.