



Stay away from Stockholm

Assembly



Aim:

- To encourage pupils to consider whether or not they are ready and willing to make changes for the better in their lives

Introduction

Slavery in the UK?

It may be hard to believe but there is evidence of slavery in the UK. A week ago the police raided a number of caravan sites throughout the country and released 24 men who had been forced to work for little or no pay, some for as many as 20 years. The vulnerable men, the youngest of whom was only 17 years old, were enticed at homeless shelters and job centres by promises of accommodation and work. On arrival at isolated destinations they were subjected to violent threats and the confiscation of vital documentation. For 12 hours a day they were made to undertake hard, physical work and given appalling living conditions with inadequate heating and sanitation. The arrival of the police signalled freedom and the possibility of a new start.

Looking Deeper

Stockholm syndrome

The expectation of anyone who hears that story is that the 24 men would be immensely grateful for the action of the police, willing to give evidence against their captors and ready to make a new start. The reality is a little more complex. Nine of those released have declined to co-operate with the police, some claiming

that the police action was too strong. One man has even returned to the caravan site from where he was set free. Why?

Stockholm syndrome is a condition recognised amongst a number of people throughout the world who have experienced captivity as a hostage, prisoner of war or slave. Through the time spent in captivity they have developed an acceptance of their situation and some sympathy with their captors. On release they have wanted their captors to be treated with the greatest sympathy and have found it very difficult to adapt to a free life. Just like some of these men.

Jesus, when people were brought to him for healing, sometimes asked the question, "Do you want to be healed?" He was asking whether the man or woman was ready to face up to the changes in their life that healing would bring: personal responsibility, the need to get work, no more sympathy, the responsibility of looking after others etc. It's the same set of issues facing the men set free in the UK. For some it's easier to rely on others to organise their lives, to provide for them (however inadequately) rather than to have to do this for themselves.

How do we respond when an opportunity is offered to us? It may be to break free of a dominant friendship, to give up smoking, to take on a role of responsibility. It's clear what the benefit will be but are we willing to accept the consequences? On the one hand are we willing to put in the effort, to create some independence, or are we tempted to take the easier option, but knowing we'll regret it in the future?

Freedom has consequences. Are we willing to face them?



Current Affairs Assembly

KS3 Self – Self Development

Assembly

40



Reflection

What are the opportunities on offer today?
What are my reservations?
Who can I turn to for support?
So what's stopping me?

Prayer

Lord Jesus
Grant me the courage to look opportunities
in the face and to grasp them
Grant me the empathy to stand alongside
those who face changes and to give them
encouragement
Amen

Keywords

slavery
Stockholm syndrome
opportunity
freedom
independence

Thought for the day

Freedom opens up a life, slavery closes it
down.



Page
2 of 2