



Introduction

The theme of our world as a precious present is explored in this assembly. This will fit in well with the SEAL topic of: 'New Beginnings' and can be used as an Advent or pre- Christmas theme.

Preparation

You will need to wrap five presents in Christmas paper (see below) and arrange for each one to be flawed in one way, as suggested. You will also need a medium-sized blow-up globe.

The assembly involves two leaders and five children

Suggested music: 'Wonderful World' by Stephen Fischbacher on the CD *Something Fischy* (5 065000174026); Fischy Music - www.fischy.com

Development

1. Begin this assembly by bringing on a box containing five attractively wrapped presents. Without any words, the leader should take out the presents, one by one, and place them on a table, expressing delight, curiosity and excitement as each one appears.

Then, still without any words, make it apparent through mime that the presents are not for the leader but for the children. Invite five children up to represent the others and receive the presents.

2. Now unwrap one present at a time for each one of the children, again with both tension and excitement!

Present 1: a new football. However, just before you give it to the child, notice that it has a hole in it and that the air comes out easily. Deflate the ball a bit and then pass it on to the child with an embarrassed smile.

Present 2: a small model Christmas tree, all decorated and looking cheerful. However, just before you give it to the child, notice that it has snapped in the middle. Allow it to droop down disappointingly as it is handed to the child with an embarrassed smile.

Present 3: a smart (folded) T-shirt, which looks very colourful and attractive. However, just before you give to the child, you open it out and discover that it is all stained and dirty on the inside. Allow it to hang down so all can see the fault, as you give it to the child with an embarrassed smile.

Present 4: a framed picture of some beautiful countryside, which like the other presents looks good at first. However, just before you give it to the child, the frame breaks and the picture falls out. Pick up the pieces carefully and hand them on to the child with another embarrassed smile!

Present 5: A brand-new looking bottle of flavoured milk. Produce a glass and offer to pour out a



drink for the final recipient. However, when you do so, out comes dirty water, which you hand to the child with a final embarrassed smile.

The five children should walk off with their broken or spoiled presents, looking puzzled and unhappy.

3. At this point a second leader should speak up:

'How sad! How disappointing! Each present looked so good and could have been great but they were all imperfect, broken and spoiled.'

Now he or she should produce a globe.

I wonder if it's a bit like that with the biggest and best present of all - the present of this world? It looks great but maybe on closer inspection is not in such a good shape after all.

4. I wonder what sort of world you are going to inherit? What sort of world will be all yours one day when you grow up?

Is it the world that it was meant to be?

Is the world in good shape?

Is it healthy or sick?

Is it a present we will be glad to receive?

5. I wonder what sort of things make our world a poor present?

Ask for some suggestions.

As each idea is put forward, put seven sticking plasters on to the globe, attaching them with some Blu-tack™ so that you won't spoil the globe for good!

Ideas might include:

Pollution; war; the extinction of wild life; the destruction of the forests; sickness; famine; sadness.

With all these plasters on, it should look a really poorly world now.

5. But Jesus said that those who are 'meek' (NIV) or 'humble' (CEV) will inherit the world one day (see Matthew 5:5).

I wonder who he means by 'the humble'?

I wonder if 'the humble' are the people who know what the world should be like?



I wonder if 'the humble' are the people who remember that it is a gift from God and that it should be looked after and not spoiled?

I wonder if 'the humble' are the people who choose...

(and as you say each of the following, remove the plasters one by one)

... peace rather than war

... care for others, not neglect

... healing not hurting

... life not death

... giving not getting

... making things clean again and not messing it up

... hope rather than despair.

6. The earth is a present, but it isn't perfect.

There is a lot to do to put the world right.

Christians believe that this is why Jesus came as a baby, to grow up and help us put the world back together again.

Putting the world back together again doesn't start with a grand plan in a big government office somewhere, nor as a great idea talked about around a table, but with the birth of a baby.

The birth of Jesus at Christmas also reminds us that the birth of you and me too matters... because we can be the ones to make a difference and make this world a present worth passing on.

7. As you hold up the now plaster-free globe, read the words from the end of the Bible about the new heaven and earth (see Revelation 21:1-4).

For reflection:

I wonder what you and I can do to help mend a broken world?

I wonder what we can do at school, to make sure this present is the best it can be?

I wonder what God feels like when he sees his present all messed up?

I wonder what I can do to help others inherit a beautiful earth?