

CAP Children's Talk

This talk can be used if you have been asked to share a short talk for the children in the church, often before the main talk. This talk centres on a rhyming story called 'A Place of Refuge' and is followed by a number of questions aimed to help the children reflect on the story.

A big thanks to Kathryn Willis (Debt Centre Manager and National Speaker Team member) for the talk and story.

INTRODUCTION

My name is _____ and I work for an organisation called Christians Against Poverty, or CAP for short.

Can anyone tell me what a Christian is?

And does anyone know what the word Poverty means?

So and this is a difficult question. – Can anyone guess what I might have to do in my job, working for Christians Against Poverty?

Did you know that God's heart breaks for the poor people of this world? He talks about them a lot in His Word. Do you know what God's word is?

In fact there are well over 100 verses about the poor and needy people in the Bible. So He really does care.

In fact He cares so much that way back in the olden days (and you can read about this in Deuteronomy, Leviticus and Numbers) he actually told the people to set aside whole cities to be places of safety and help to those in need.

Who likes history? Well, today we have a little bit of a history story for you. You need to listen carefully because I'm going to ask you some questions at the very end of see how well you have been listening. Now, are you all sitting comfortably? Then, we'll begin. Please give a big clap for our Amazing Storyteller _____! *(You can have somebody else read the story and read the story yourself)*

PLACE OF REFUGE

Our story begins way back in time
(Oh by the way this story's in rhyme)
In 9th century Britain when life was so rough
And making ends meet was truly quite tough.

Back then lived a King who was good (that's a cert),
One of the first Christian Kings. His name? Ethelbert.
You'll not find him much in school history books
And he wasn't renowned for celebrity looks

But his kindness and that of Berta, his wife,
Changed the fortunes of many from darkness to light
By making the churches across his nation
Become a place of refuge, a safe location.

He decreed that sanctuary should be given to those
In need of some help, or running from foes;
A place where the helpless, distressed or afraid
Could come and be safe and lay down their head.

"Throw open the doors!" King Ethelbert cried.
"For those in need to come shelter inside".
Now the monks who looked after the church in that day
Would invite people in to sing praises and pray

But it seems now another commission was theirs
To position themselves on the walls, towers and stairs
Looking out to the countryside round and about
And if they saw someone running, they just had to shout!

*"Throw open the doors! Let this poor man inside!
Where we'll tend to his needs and let him abide
Safe from the storm, his distress and his trouble
Quick! Bring him some food and clean clothes on the double!"*

They even sent riders out looking for those
Who stumbled and struggled away from their foes
Meeting their needs right there in the field

Or carrying them back to the church to be healed.

No-one was judged for their status or race
The cut of their cloth or the look of their face
Whether they lived in a castle or shack
All were welcomed inside, none were ever turned back.

The poor man was aided, the hungry were fed
The homeless found shelter, warm clothes and a bed
Those drowning in misfortune were thrown a rope
Of compassion, love, mercy, grace and new hope.

And so, due to Ethelbert's wondrous decree
Many came to be helped and I bet you'll agree
That lives were transformed through this great act of mercy
People like Tom, Jack, Barbara and Percy.

You see
Ethelbert and his Queen hit the nail on the head
When they studied God's word and all that it said
Regarding the poor, the weak and oppressed
The needy, the lonely, the sick and the stressed.

Jesus said, "Come to me if you're burdened and weary
Let Me raise you up from ashes to beauty
I'll be your strong tower, your shelter, safe harbour
Your life I'll re-write, just let me be the Author.

Many centuries on and His call stays the same
For places of refuge to stand out in His Name
With watchers and riders all ready to go
Looking for those who so need to know

That God loves His world so much that he gave
His beloved son Jesus, so all could be saved.

The End

QUESTIONS

1. What was the name of the King in the story?
2. Does anybody remember the name of his wife?
3. What did King Ethelbert do? Why?

4. Who came into the places of refuge and shelter?
5. Do you think that Jesus still wants us to help the poor and the needy today?
6. How do you think we can do that?
7. Do you think that Jesus wants to help anyone in distress? Even us?