

## Prayer Stations for Remembrance Sunday on the theme of Courage

These are the words we used on the boards accompanying each Prayer Station. You are welcome to use them or adapt them.

### Station 1: Physical Courage

Daniel showed physical courage when he went into the lions' den; despite his fear he trusted God to save him from the lions.

Do not be afraid for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God. *Isaiah 41:10*

During World War I there were many acts of physical courage. Here is an account of just one:

(We used Captain White's extract from Paul Allen's book "Neath a foreign sky" which can be found here (Scarborough Maritime Heritage Centre): <http://tinyurl.com/qw7m9c9> )

**Prayer activity:** You may like to pray for courage to meet life's challenges:

(We used a prayer that began "I pray for courage as I begin this day...")

**Play activity:** Make a poppy to remember someone who died in World War I.

(Pictures used with this display included ones of Daniel in the lion's den)

## **Station 2: Enduring courage**

### **Making the best of difficult times**

The Israelites arrived in Babylon after a forced march of over 500 miles. They had seen the city of Jerusalem burning and did not know what was happening to those left behind.

They felt cut off from God as they had come to connect him with the temple in Jerusalem. They hung their harps on the willow trees and sang their sad songs:

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion.  
There on the poplars  
we hung our harps,  
for there our captors asked us for songs,  
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;  
they said, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'  
How can we sing the songs of the LORD  
while in a foreign land?

### **Psalm 137**

But most of the time the Israelites were not treated too harshly by the Babylonians. They were allowed to settle by the river Chebar. Many of them became wealthy and some, like Daniel, reached positions of authority.

In time they realised that God was with them wherever they went and were able to worship him again.

### **Life in the trenches**

Soldiers' endurance was tested daily by living in the trenches.

The trenches were always muddy and often waterlogged. Soldiers suffered from trench foot due to having permanently wet feet.

Millions of rats infested the trenches, some growing as big as cats.

Soldiers suffered from lice which were impossible to get rid of.

They were often deafened by the noise of shellfire.

The smell was appalling – a mix of decaying bodies, overflowing latrines, sweaty feet and creosol, which was used to try and prevent infection.

Soldiers got little sleep, but had to be constantly ready for an attack. Each morning just before dawn they had to stand to in readiness. If they slept on sentry duty they were likely to be shot.

We used an extract from the History Learning Site:

<http://tinyurl.com/hb2mo3u>

“A good standing trench was about six foot deep ...” (Frank Richards)

**Play activity:** You might like to use the materials to create a symbol of courage. You could use the clay, the beads or the art materials.

**Prayer activity:** What are the biggest difficulties in your daily life? The Israelites found that God was with them through all their difficulties both big and small. You may like to take a cross to remind you that God is with you in the same way that he was with them. You may like to say this prayer: (We used a prayer that began “O God you know how often we are filled with fear and foreboding...”)

(Pictures used for this station included the Israelites in exile and soldiers in the trenches)

## **Station 3: Moral Courage**

### **Standing up for what you believe**

King Nebuchadnezzar said to them, “Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the golden image that I have set up?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

### **Conscientious objectors**

During World War 1 people who objected to all warfare on principle and refused to fight were called conscientious objectors. Many of them were Quakers.

They had to defend their views at tribunals and if it was agreed they had moral or religious reasons for refusing to fight they were allowed to do other war work like driving ambulances or working on the land. Some conscientious objectors refused to do even that and were put in prison.

As the war went on and so many men were killed at the front, people became more resentful of conscientious objectors. Girls often gave white feathers (for cowardice) to any young men not in uniform.

We used the testimonies of Bert Brocklesby and Hilda Clark from White Feather Diaries:

<http://www.whitefeatherdiaries.org.uk/about-site>

**Prayer activity:** Is there anything you would be prepared to stand up for? Would you be able to do it, if it meant having everyone against you?

You may like to say a prayer asking for the courage to stand up for what is right.

As a symbol of your prayer you may like to tie a white cloth to the wire fence.

**Play activity:** You may like to remember Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego standing up for what was right by creating a fiery furnace.

(Pictures to accompany this station included the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and pictures of hospital orderlies during the first world war.)

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