

THE WALK

Ideas for using this resource in GCSE RE and Key Stage 4 PSE

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Teachers' overview

The Walk tells the story of William Wilberforce and his personal journey towards the abolition of slavery. As this year commemorates the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the past and learn from the committed efforts of individuals such as Wilberforce.

Despite the fact that the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act was passed in 1807, slavery is still a major issue today. At least 12.3 million people are victims of forced labour worldwide. Of these, 2.4 million are as a result of human trafficking. Wilberforce and his contemporaries were willing to stand up against the growth industry of slavery and were committed to seeing this trade in human beings end. The story of William Wilberforce and his fight against injustice is as relevant today as it ever has been.

Of course, the abolition of slavery was not down to the work of one individual. John Newton, Hannah Moore and Granville Sharp are mentioned in the DVD, and there were many others who campaigned for the abolition of the slave trade. One such influential figure was Olaudah Equiano. Equiano, a former slave himself, bought his freedom and then moved to England where he joined the campaign for the abolition of slavery. Through his autobiography and public speaking tours, Equiano helped to change public opinion on slavery. It is significant that the campaign to abolish slavery was the first campaign in Britain that crossed boundaries of class, race and gender. Many ordinary citizens who did not have the vote got behind the campaign.

This DVD acts as an introduction to the campaign to abolish the slave trade and wider issues of slavery, with a specific focus on an individual who was willing to make a stand because he was prompted by conscience and faith.

This DVD can be used in a number of ways. The target audience includes:

- GCSE RE – issues of injustice and individuals who are motivated by their faith to make a stand against injustice.
- 6th Form General Studies/Citizenship classes – Issues in global citizenship.

It would also be a good resource for 6th Form PSE classes.

There are many very good History textbooks and websites which outline the story of the transatlantic slave trade and they could be well used by teachers alongside this DVD.

Recommended reading:

Abolition! The Struggle to Abolish Slavery in the British Empire Richard Reddie, Lion Hudson, 2007

William Wilberforce Stephen Hopkins, Lion Hudson, 2007

William Wilberforce: The Life of the Great Anti-slave Trade Campaigner, William Hague, HarperPress, 2007

Using *The Walk* in GCSE RE (or as a PSE resource)

This resource could be used as part of the WJEC 'religion and conflict' module and also as part of the WJEC 'Is it fair?' module. Many schools use this board for their GCSE short course examinations.

Pupils could use the DVD as a springboard resource for a short project on Wilberforce and how he campaigned for the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. This could lead to a further investigation of the individuals and groups involved in campaigning for the abolition of slavery. The purpose behind the project could be individuals who stand up against injustice. This brings good and clear cross-curricular links between RE and Citizenship. A focus on Wilberforce within GCSE RE fulfils both the learning about and learning from aspects of the subject. Pupils are encouraged to study the life of an individual prompted into action by his faith and also to reflect on the significance of acting upon one's beliefs.

Questions for initial discussion and for written responses:

- Why do you think that this DVD is called *The Walk*?
- What kind of journey was Wilberforce on?
- What motivated William Wilberforce to campaign for the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade?
- Have you ever felt compelled to act? Have you ever witnessed an injustice that you felt must be confronted?

Project – Standing up for your beliefs

Throughout history there have been many people who have stood up for what they believe in. Individuals such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela have risked a great deal to see change happen. William Wilberforce was such a man. He was willing to risk his position and reputation to stand up for a cause that he believed was worth fighting for. Working in pairs or small groups, your task is to produce a project on William Wilberforce, showing who he was, what he achieved and how he achieved it.

Content – your project must include the following information:

- Who was Wilberforce? – Biography of Wilberforce's life
- What motivated him? – What were his key influences?
- What did he do? – This will be the main part of the project – How did William Wilberforce campaign for the abolition of slavery?

- What did he achieve? – What was the outcome of the campaign?

In your projects, include words and pictures, and try to include some direct quotes from Wilberforce.

Here are some useful places to start your research:

<http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/unchaining> – This booklet was produced for churches but has lots of information about the struggles against slavery in Parliament and in Britain's colonies in Wilberforce's lifetime. It will help you to understand the religious and moral arguments that were made for and against the trade. The booklet ends with information about slavery today.

<http://www.antislavery.org/> – The website of Anti-Slavery International, founded in 1839 to eliminate slavery and related abuses worldwide. Contains valuable information about the transatlantic slave trade and about campaigns against modern forms of slavery.

<http://www.setallfree.net/> – A useful information website about the slave trade and how it still affects people today, produced on behalf of most of England's main church denominations.

William Wilberforce was very influenced by his Christian faith. The following passages from the Bible were very significant in motivating Wilberforce to campaign so enthusiastically against the slave trade:

- Matthew 7.12
- Genesis 1.26-27
- Acts 10.34
- Luke 10.27

Look these up and see if you can identify how they motivated Wilberforce.