

# Health Assembly

**Themes:** Health and wellbeing

**Materials Required:** Scripts for each reader, PowerPoint, 4 pieces of large card

**Country focus:** Nigeria

**Time allocation:** 20-30 minutes

## Leader

In April every year the world celebrates World Health Day. On this day around the world people celebrate the importance of health to be able to live a happy life.

- What do you think 'healthy living' means?
- What sort of things do we all need to stay healthy?

In many countries around the world people are not able to see doctors or nurses when they are feeling unwell. Without this care people can get very sick, and babies and children suffer the most.

In 2015, a set of global goals were launched to end poverty and protect the planet – these are called the Sustainable Development Goals, (they replace the Millennium Development Goals). One of the seventeen goals is all about health and well-being – it has many targets and one of them is to reduce deaths of children under five.

- Have any babies been born in your family recently, or do you have younger brothers and sisters at home?
- Why do you think new babies are taken to the doctor for injections and check-ups?
- What sort of things do people do to care for babies?

Children born into poverty are almost twice as likely to die before the age of five as those from richer families.

Here are some of the reasons why:

*4 children to hold up, read the cards, and walk across the stage:*

**Not enough food**

**Washing in unclean water**

**Drinking unclean water**

**Lack of medicine**

We are now going to learn about a family who live in Nigeria. Nigeria is a country in West Africa.

Many Nigerian children are not able to grow up to be healthy because of illnesses caught from unclean water, and because they do not have enough good food to eat. The Church in Nigeria is helping people by opening clinics for new mothers, new babies and young children so that they do not fall ill.

Let's meet Florence. Florence is married to Alphonsious and they have ten children! Here is Florence's story about how important healthcare is for her family and community.

### **Main presentation – Slideshow PowerPoint of photographs**

#### **Speaker 1**

**Welcome to my village!** Here you can see some of the women in the village making food. I work on the farm with our animals, and I cook and fetch water for my family every day. I look after my children and make sure that they are healthy and happy. My husband works at the local clinic called St Monica's. The clinic is a place that helps people who are ill and need care. My husband helps people understand the importance of healthy living for mothers, new babies and young children.

#### **Speaker 2**

**To keep my children healthy** I know they need food and clean water. We have one stream nearby which we use for all of our water needs, including drinking, washing and watering our goats. There is a little bit of water left in the stream now, but when the dry season is at its worst, and there is no rain for weeks, we have to walk half a day to the next village to fetch water.

#### **Speaker 3**

**We are very careful with the water we fetch.** All of my children have had a disease called typhoid. This disease comes from unclean water. Better healthcare is so important for all of us living in my community. St Monica's clinic is a real help, but we need more clinics and more nurses and more medicine.

#### **Speaker 4**

**This is my youngest son, Albert.** When Albert was born his leg was very swollen and looked infected. He was in a lot of pain and we were so worried about him. The government hospitals are far away and very expensive. We took Albert straight to St Monica's clinic which helps local people with medicine and care.

#### **Speaker 5**

**This is nurse Teclar** who met Albert in the clinic and found out that he had a broken leg. Albert's leg was put in plaster and he was treated with medicine for the infection. Albert was in the clinic for a month and I was very worried about him. With lots of help from the nurses Albert felt much better and was able to come back home to his brothers and sisters who really missed him!

#### **Speaker 6**

**Who knows what would have happened to Albert** if St Monica's clinic wasn't there? Our family could not afford to pay for treatment at the government hospital. We are so thankful to the nurses who work at St Monica's clinic.

#### **Speaker 7**

**I thank God for the clinic.** Thanks to the nurses at the clinic my baby is healthy and I am happy. I hope and pray that Albert and his brothers and sisters have long and happy lives. I hope that Albert grows up to be a nurse or a doctor so that he can carry on helping people!

#### **Speaker 8**

**St Monica's gives so much to this community.** We are happier and healthier because of the care that the nurses give us. We trust the healthcare at St Monica's - good healthcare gives us hope for the future.

## **Reflection**

### **Leader**

Albert's story is a happy one. Thanks to the work of CAFOD and the Church in Nigeria, and the support from people here in the UK, these health centres are saving children's lives every day.

Remember, improving the health is one of the Sustainable Development Goals. Try to find out more about these goals when you leave here today, and talk to your friends and family about the importance of good healthcare for children and families.

## **Prayer**

### **Leader**

Let us now pray together:

God our Father, we thank you for your gift of life.

We pray that children everywhere may be given all that they need to live long and happy lives.

Amen.