

St Stephen Walbrook: Schools Exploration Sheet (Samaritans)



Samaritans

Revd. Dr Chad Varah (1911-2007) launched The Samaritans from the crypt of St Stephen Walbrook church on 2nd November 1953. His aim was to “befriend the suicidal and despairing”. The charity was the first 24 hour crisis line. The telephone that Revd Dr Chad Varah used can be seen in a glass cabinet.

There are today 17000 volunteers who now give emotional support to people on the phone, but also by text, email and face to face. Revd. Dr Chad Varah felt the job of the volunteers was to listen, "They are in fact people who cannot bring themselves to pass by on the other side when somebody's needing them."

In the tribute book to Chad Varah, people have written

Amazing and selfless achievement of a life. I know you live on in the hearts of many you touched. A visionary.

When the skies were darkened, you brought light.

www.samaritans.org

Reflections

- What is harder, listening or talking and why?
- Why did Revd. Dr Chad Varah want The Samaritans not to be seen as a religious organisation?

Activities

- Try listening to a partner speaking about their life and interests for three minutes without interrupting. How did it feel? Then change roles. List five rules for being a good listener.
- How does the story of the Good Samaritan link with the organisation? Role play the biblical story of the Good Samaritan but using the themes of needing support and someone to talk to.