**Anne Frank**

Suitable for Key Stage 2 - Church Schools

**Aims**

To learn about prejudice and persecution, and the suffering they can cause.

**Assembly**

How many people here have brown eyes?

How many people here don't have brown eyes?

How would you feel if, next week, the government ordered that everyone who didn't have brown eyes had to wear a yellow coat every time they left their house? If whenever you visited your granny, went shopping or played outside, you always had to wear a yellow coat?

How would you feel, a month later; if another law was brought in saying that yellow-coat people couldn't go to the cinema or attend football matches? Then, that yellow-coat people had to shop only between the hours of 3 and 4 p.m.? Then, that yellow-coat people couldn't own pets? And so on and so on and so on...

It sounds horrible, but this is exactly what happened in Germany during the 1930s. Only it wasn't people that didn't have brown eyes who were persecuted like this, it was people who were - or who were believed to be - Jewish. They didn't wear a yellow coat - they wore a yellow star - but the 'laws' we heard about earlier were all real laws that Adolf Hitler made when he took control of Germany.

Today we are going to think about one of the people who was caught up in the terrible events of that time. Some of you might have heard of her. Her name was Anne Frank and she was Jewish. Born in 1929, she was 10 when the Second World War broke out and was living in comparative safety in Amsterdam, Holland.

But in 1940 the German army invaded the Netherlands. The Frank family, like so many others, were trapped. They found themselves having to wear a yellow star and being harassed by all the laws that we mentioned earlier. Worse, the German authorities started to round up Jewish people and send them to concentration camps. In 1942 they tried to round up Anne's father Otto. It seemed like the beginning of the end for them. What could the family do? What do you think you would have done in their situation?

On July 6th 1942 the family made their way into a set of secret rooms behind their father's office. They were joined by another Jewish family. For the next two years they remained in their hiding place. What do you think it was like? Imagine you and your family stuck in a couple of rooms - say eight of you in a space the size of one and a half classrooms - never able to go out, never able to make a noise, never able to be alone, and always anxious that one day you would be discovered and killed?

We know what things were like for the family because Anne kept a diary. Often things seemed grim. (Read from page 137 of Anne Frank's Diary: 'Relationships here in the Annexe are getting worse all the time ... going to permanently droop at the corners'.) But it wasn't all sadness and anxiety. Anne's diary is filled with dreams and hope. She looks forward to all the exciting things she will be able to do when they escape. Sometimes she just looks out of the window, at the trees and the blue sky; so close but so unreachable, and feels happy that at least they are there and one day, perhaps, she'll be able to touch them: 'As long as this exists - I thought - this sunshine and this cloudless sky; and as long as I can enjoy it, how can I be sad?' (p.195)

Day after day Anne listened to the radio, following the advance of the Allied armies as they pushed Hitler's army back into Germany. Everyone in the attic realized that soon, if they could just hold on, they'd be free. Unfortunately, it never happened. Someone betrayed their hiding place. On August 4th 1944 they were all arrested. Anne died in Bergen Belsen concentration camp, not long before it was liberated by British troops. All that was left was her diary.

**Time for reflection**

Let's close our eyes and think about the life of Anne Frank: Her family had done nothing wrong but they were treated like criminals. Why?

The Frank family were Jewish. That, in the end, was their only 'crime'. But have things changed? All around the world people are still abused because of their race or their religion:

Are we always generous and open towards other people? (Pause).

Finally, let's remember Anne's hopes and dreams. She looked forward to a time when she could walk freely in the sunshine, without fearing that darkness would suddenly descend. May that time come for everyone, soon.