

Lesson 2

Elizabeth Fry

Starter: Should prisoners be allowed to have TVs in their cells? Explain your answer.

Task 1: Watch the video of conditions in Victorian prisons. List what would have made it hard.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= IAGJGwoLss>



Task 2: Watch the video and look at these key times in her life. Highlight the six events that most made her into a woman who wanted to change prisons.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRnTEBHkhk4>

What she did: Elizabeth Fry helped people in prison. She visited prisons that were dark, dirty and dangerous. She believed even prisoners should be treated with kindness. She was a brave reformer.

When did she live? Elizabeth Fry was born in 1780. Britain was changing. The Industrial Revolution was bringing new machines and factories. Elizabeth met Queen Victoria when the queen was a young woman. Elizabeth Fry died in 1845.

How she changed things: John Howard (1726-90) was England's first prison reformer, but Elizabeth was the first woman to campaign for better prisons. It was unusual for a woman to lead a campaign.

Elizabeth's parents: Elizabeth was born on 21st May 1780. Her father John Gurney was a banker in Norwich. He also owned a factory. Her mother Catherine Bell came from a family of bankers. Catherine was a Quaker. Elizabeth was brought up as a Quaker too.

The family home: The Gurney family lived in a fine house, Earlham Hall. Built in 1642, it was already old when Elizabeth lived there as a child.

Helping others: Elizabeth's mother believed rich people should help others, through charity work. She took her children to visit poor families, bringing food and clothes.

Looking after the family: When Elizabeth was 12, her mother died. Now she helped bring up her brothers and sisters.

Visiting Newgate Gaol: In 1813, Elizabeth visited Newgate Gaol, the most horrible prison in London. Old Newgate Gaol, 600 years old, burned down in 1780. The new prison was already overcrowded and dirty.

Public executions: Outside Newgate, people were hanged. Crowds came to watch, and rich people paid for seats with the best view. Inside Newgate, Elizabeth met Harriet Skelton. This poor woman had been caught using forged (fake) money. Harriet was hanged.

Women and children in prison: Elizabeth wanted to help the 300 women and children in Newgate. Small children were shut up with murderers. Children were locked up just because their mothers were in prison.

Life for prisoners: Prisoners slept on the floor, on straw. There was only one tap for water. The toilet was a bucket. Many prisoners were ill. Some were so violent that the governor was scared to go into his own prison!

Task 3: One thing that motivated her more than most was her Christian faith. She read the Bible herself and to prisoners. Below are extracts from the Bible. Choose TWO that might have inspired her to help prisoners and explain why.

<p>The creation story in Genesis So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.</p>	<p>Part of a song written by King David in the book of Psalms For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.</p>
<p>Something happened to Jacob in the book of Genesis So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."</p>	<p>Jesus speaks to the thief dying on the cross next to him. Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."</p>

Extension: Which of Jesus' parables might inspire Elizabeth to help prisoners?