

HARVEST TALK 2019 – Justice for Creation (PLASTIC)

So it's Harvest – time to give thanks to God for the good things in our world, especially our food and those who work hard to make it. But also a time to think more widely about how to care for our world. Our world is precious, but it's also fragile. Creation groans in longing for its restoration as our passage in Romans says.

This Autumn we're looking at the whole theme of justice – so it made sense to think about harvest in terms of justice for creation. The reality is that we're not treating it justly. We're pulling and pulling the elastic band and at some point it's going to snap.

Lots of things we could look at – but big one at moment is plastic. Spoken to over 1,500 schoolchildren this week about it – but thought to myself, why should that message only be for the kids? So you're getting a toned down version of my school assembly today!

PLASTIC LITTER – SHOW ITEMS, WHAT ARE THEY USED FOR?

Plastic is an amazing thing, can be used in so many ways – it can be hard or soft, it can be round or square or any shape at all. We use it to wrap things, hold things, carry things, we can even wear it – **SCHOOL: ALL OF YOU HERE ARE WEARING PLASTIC: CHECK YOUR JUMPERS (acrylic/polyester)**

QUESTIONS: 1. Anybody know what plastic is made from? OIL

2. How long have we been making plastic? 150 years, and invented to stop us using elephant tusks for things!

3. How much plastic does the whole world make per year? 320 million tons

4. **What proportion of the world's plastic is recycled?**

- **RECYCLING:** We're quite good at it – 53% of our waste gets recycled in MK, but only 9% around the world.
- 2/3 of our plastic ends up in the seas and oceans

Last year my Harvest assembly was about one of these: **POTATO**

Like plastic you can use a potato for lots of things – you can eat it, but you can lots of other things too: **ASK**

Difference is that a potato is a natural thing – it comes from the ground, and it goes back to the ground. If you don't eat it, it rots away and becomes soil again and helps other things to grow.

Now a plastic BOTTLE starts as oil, so it does start in the ground, but once it turns into plastic, it lasts – *do you know how long this bottle will last before it rots: up to 450 years.* (That's like William Shakespeare drinking a bottle, or Francis Drake drinking a bottle of water before chasing off the Spanish Armada, throwing bottle in sea and it only rots away now)

Or take a plastic bag – how long is the average use for one? 12 minutes....

Why does this matter? ASK

Not good for our world – only got one world and it's amazing, it produces everything we need. But we've got to look after it

Not good for animals – eat things with plastic in them, or their homes get rubbish (and they don't have rubbish lorries to take them away)

(Not good for us)

Why we're having Plastic Week Exhibition at AS – but challenge for all of us

3 ways we can help, all begin with R ASK

- **Reduce** – so don't buy as many things that need plastic.
- **Reuse** – so use same bottle again, or turn it into something else
- **Recycle** – put it in recycling sack so gets turned into more plastic – this bottle might become another bottle, traffic cone, wheelie bin, gutters for your house or even fluff in your duvets!

HOLD UP BOTTLE

Plastic is an amazing thing – but it's so good we're using too much of it. So as we give thanks for our world this Harvest time, let's recommit ourselves to looking after our world better.

And if it feels like your contribution is a tiny drop, **remember our gospel reading. Our kingdom work is like a mustard seed**, looks tiny BUT watch how it grows! Secret of kingdom – true for church and gospel, also true for all our work done for glory of God. All our contributions matter!