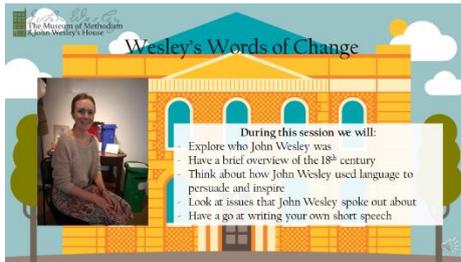


Transcript of 'Wesley's Words of Change'

Slide one - Introduction



Welcome to this session from John Wesley's House and the Museum of Methodism. I'm Gemma Smith and I'm the Learning and Community Engagement Officer from the Museum.

This session should take around 45 minutes to an hour and you'll need a computer or tablet with the sound on, a pen, paper and a bit of imagination. To pause the presentation right click on the slide and press pause, then right click again and press resume when you are ready.

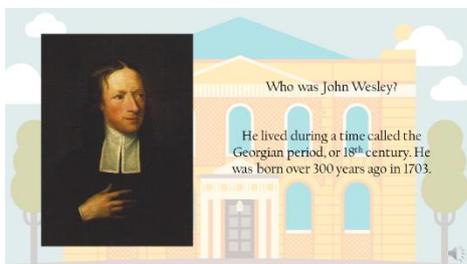
During this session we will:

Explore who John Wesley was and have a brief overview of the 18th century.

We'll be thinking about how John Wesley used writing and speaking to express his feelings and to try to persuade others to change their views or to inspire people.

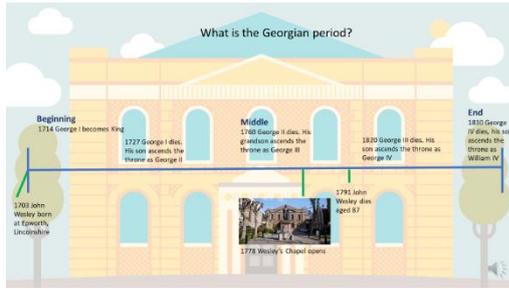
We'll also consider some of the causes John Wesley spoke out about, and you'll get the chance to write your own short speech.

Slide two



So, let's begin with a bit more about who John Wesley was. He was born in 1703 in a village called Epworth in Lincolnshire. He was one of 10 children, and his father was a Church of England minister (he worked for the church). The 18th century is any date that begins with a 17, so from 1700 to 1799. The 18th century overlapped with the Georgian period; we'll have a quick look at a timeline so we understand a bit more about the time we're talking about.

Slide three

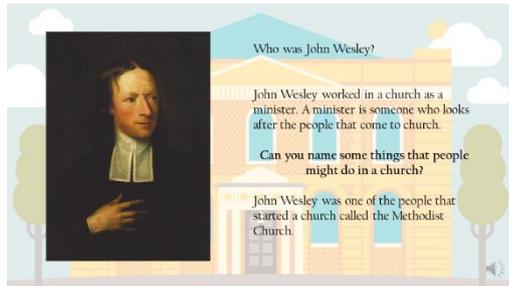


By looking at the timeline we can see that John Wesley was born right at the beginning of the 18th century in 1703. The Georgian period overlaps with most of the 18th century and it's called the Georgian period because there were four kings, all called George, one after the other.

George I became king in 1714 and he ruled until 1727. His son then became king George II. In 1760 George II died and his grandson became George III and he was the longest reigning monarch of the period up until 1820. From 1811 to 1820 there's a period of time called the Regency period (you might have heard of this before because it's when the author Jane Austin wrote some of her books). George III became too ill to rule so his son, the Prince Regent, or future George IV, took over. In 1820 when George III died, the Prince Regent officially became George IV. George IV ruled until 1830, and his son then became William IV. The next person in line to the throne after William was Victoria, who became queen in 1837. Her reign is known as the Victorian period, so the Georgian times are right before the Victorian period.

If we look at John Wesley's dates we can see that he was alive for most of the 18th century and a big part of the Georgian period. He didn't die until 1791 when he was 87, quite old for this time! In the picture we can see Wesley's Chapel which opened in 1778. It's still there and used as a church and on the same site is John Wesley's House which is where John lived for the last 10 years or so of his life.

Slide four



Let's go back and find out more about who John Wesley was.

As a young child John was educated at home in Epworth by his mother, Susanna Wesley, as were his brothers and sisters. John was very lucky as he was eventually able to go to boarding school. At this time, it was mainly the children of wealthy families that went to school. Whilst John's family was not wealthy, John was awarded a scholarship to a school in London (which meant someone paid for his place for him). The school was called Charterhouse School (which is now a museum), and aged 10, in 1714, he went off to school there.

He was there until 1720 and then went to Oxford University. Again, most people didn't go to university at this time; for example, no women were allowed to go to Oxford university until the 1870s and it was way beyond the financial means of most Georgian families.

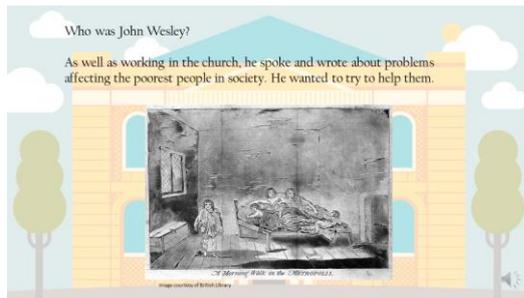
He finished university, and a few years later in 1728 he became a minister for the Church of England and settled in Oxford as he liked it there.

Q: Can you name some things people might do in a church? (can press pause if you want to chat for a few mins)

A: 1) Go to a service, perhaps on a Sunday 2) See a minister, priest or vicar leading a service 3) Hear people singing hymns 4) See people praying, either together or individually.

By the time John was a minister in 1728, his younger brother Charles was studying at Oxford. With his brother, John Wesley started a group with some friends called the Holy Club. They got together to read the bible but also to think about how they could help those most in need in the local community. They got a nickname: Methodists, as they had a methodical approach to their faith and how to live. From this group a way of life grew and today John Wesley, as well as his brother Charles, are most well-known for starting the Methodist Church. Have you heard of the Methodist Church? (Perhaps look up if there is one near you?)

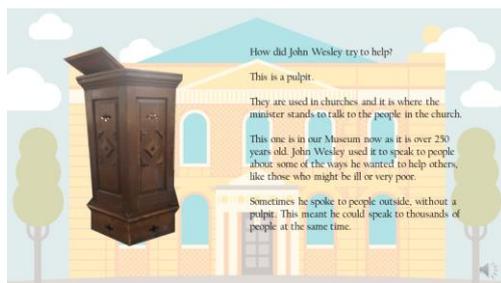
Slide five



When we are thinking about who John Wesley was it’s also important to think about the time in which he lived and how other people lived. As well as working in the church, he spoke about the issues affecting the poorest people in society.

During this time a lot of people were very poor. The poorest people found it hard to afford three meals a day and usually had only one set of clothes. People lived in overcrowded housing with families sharing just one room for sleeping, living, cooking and eating. If they got sick, it was unlikely they could afford to see a doctor or pay for medicine as health care was not free at this time. The poorest people in society had a really tough time and John Wesley, and his brother Charles, thought the church should be doing more to help those most in need.

Slide six



During this session we’re going to look at two objects from the Museum that link to John Wesley and the causes that were important to him. We’ll look at one now, then there is an activity about it. We’ll then look at the second object and there’s a further activity linked to that.

This is a pulpit – you might have seen one in a church. It’s where the person leading the service stands to speak to people.

This one is from a chapel called the Foundry Chapel, it’s over 250 years old. The building is no longer there but it was about a five-minute walk from where Wesley’s Chapel is today. Even though the building is no longer there the pulpit was saved. John Wesley used this pulpit to talk to people during services

at the Chapel. When he stood in it, he would be a bit higher than the people sat in the church, why do you think this is important?

- 1) So everybody could see him
- 2) Would have helped everyone to hear him better (remember there were no microphones at the time)

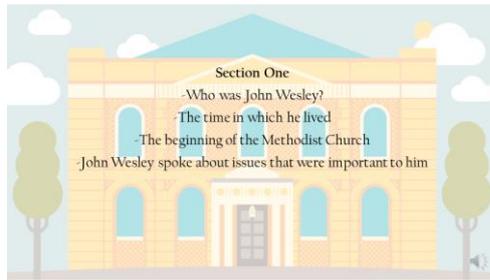
Even though John worked for the Church of England, he thought the church should be doing more to help people most in need. He also worshipped in a slightly different way and this wasn't always very popular. He wanted to use his position to speak to lots of people about what he believed and also to try and get them to help others.

Many people, including some from the Church of England, didn't agree with what John believed. Even some of John's own family were worried about what he was saying. Some people might say John was brave for standing up for what he believed in, especially against powerful people like some in the Church of England, but he was convinced he was doing the right thing. However, more and more people did listen to and follow him and this movement eventually became the Methodist Church.

John Wesley didn't just preach in one place. Because he wanted to speak to as many people as he could, he travelled all over the country, mainly on horseback. Sometimes, churches wouldn't let him in to use their pulpits so he just spoke to people outside! Sometimes under a tree, or in a field. This meant lots of people could listen to him. In this country in the 18th century, Methodism became popular, especially with working class people. Some of them were worried about going into a church, so being able to listen to someone outside was better.

As mentioned earlier, John Wesley wanted to help those most in need, like the poorest people in his local community, often they were the working-class people.

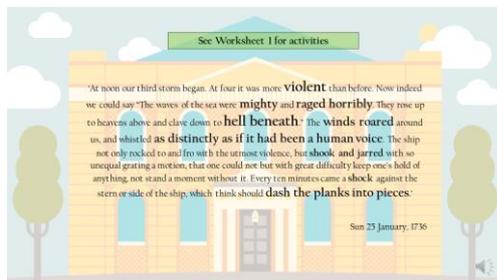
Slide seven



Re-cap of section one

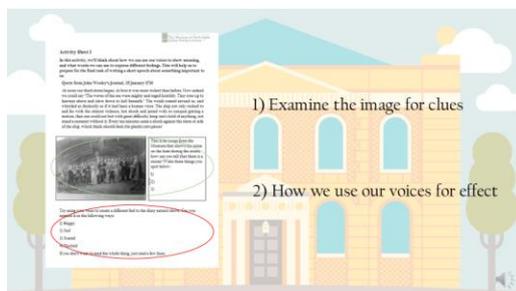
We're now going to complete our first activity sheet, which is explained over the next couple of slides. We're going to think about how we use language to express feelings and to do this we are going to use an extract from John Wesley's diary that he wrote in 1736.

Slide 8



This is the extract and it was written by John Wesley on 25 January 1736. At this time, he was on his way to America, he'd been sent there to help set up churches. On the way there was a bad storm and he wrote about it in his diary. (Extract is read).

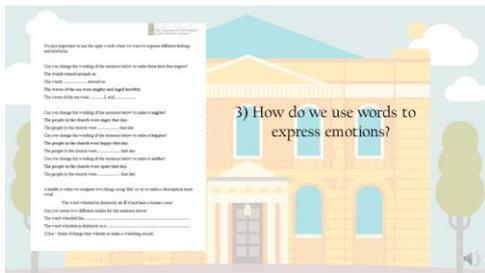
Slide 9



With the presentation there are two downloadable sheets and this is the first page of the first one. The activity sheet should take around 20 minutes but it could take longer depending on how many of the tasks you do.

For the first activity, look at the image from the Museum that depicts the scene on board the ship. Examine the image for clues that tell you there was a storm. Secondly, we're going to have think about how we use our voices for effect. Please have a go at reading the extract, or part of it, with different voices as per the instructions on the sheet. The reason we're thinking about how we use our voices is because when we are speaking publicly, it's important to convey your emotions and get that across to the people listening.

Slide 10



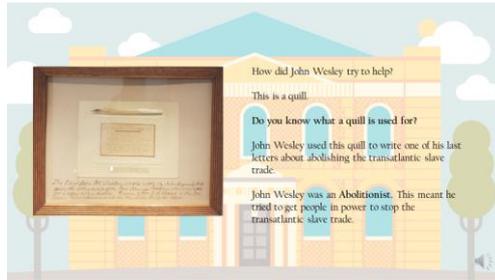
On page two, work through the sentences you see and change the wording to express different things, this is to get us thinking about the language we use.

Slide 11



Finally, if you look at the picture of the boat again you will see there are children on board. What you're going to do is write a short diary extract about the storm. If you like, you can use drama to try and re-create the scene. The diary extract you write doesn't have to be really long, it's up to you, what we're trying to do is think about how we set the scene with the words we use. When you've completed the activities, move on to the next section.

Slide 12

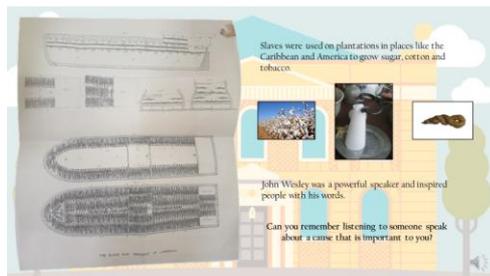


We'll now look at the second object from our collection that links to John Wesley and the causes he spoke out about. Do you know what it is? It's a quill, do you know what that's used for? It's used for writing and it's made from a feather. It's sharpened at one end then dipped in ink. This particular quill was used to write one of John Wesley's last letters before he died.

John Wesley was an abolitionist – this meant he wanted to ban the slave trade.

The slave trade supported a lot of the wealth of Great Britain at this time, but John felt the way slaves were treated was incredibly cruel and this treatment of people could never be justified. The letter he wrote with this quill was to a man named William Wilberforce who campaigned in government for the abolition of the slave trade. Eventually the slave trade was banned, but not until 1833.

Slide 13



The transatlantic slave trade saw people, mainly from west coast and central Africa, forcibly removed from their homes and sailed thousands of miles across the ocean then forced to work in awful conditions without pay.

This image shows one of the slave ships used. They were so overcrowded and the conditions were so awful that many people died on the journey. Those people that survived were forced to work in places like the Caribbean and the southern states of America on plantations to grow and pick sugar cane, cotton and tobacco. Sugar, cotton and tobacco were becoming much more popular consumer goods in the 18th century. The work was back breaking – long hours in the hot sun without proper food, drink, accommodation or clothing. They were treated very cruelly.

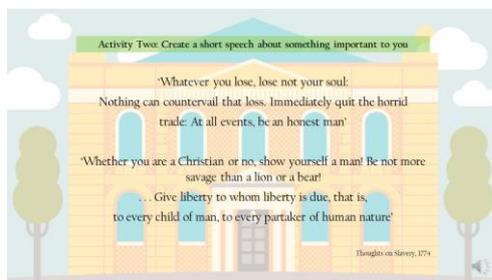
The images show some cotton, a sugar cone and a tobacco twist. The cotton had to be picked by hand so it was hard, time consuming work. The middle image is of a sugar cone, and it is how sugar would have been bought in the 18th century. It's a cone shape as they were easier to transport but they were very hard, so you needed special scissors, like those at the top of the image, to cut bits off to use. The last image is a tobacco twist.

John Wesley, like many others, wanted the slave trade to stop. He tried to persuade those in power to make it illegal by speaking and writing about abolishing the slave trade.

From the pulpit with his sermons and speeches and through his writing, John Wesley tried to persuade people to think differently and wanted to inspire people to take action.

Pause for a few moments and think about someone that's spoken about a cause that's important to you, or someone that's made you change your mind about something.

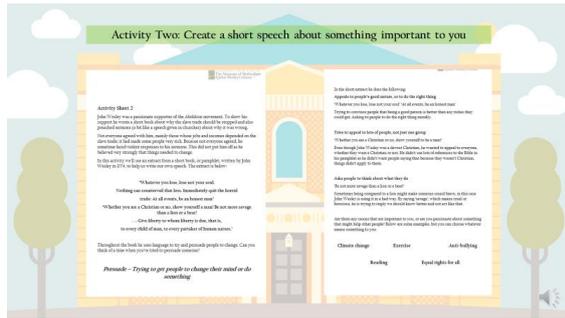
Slide 14



For the second activity you're going to have a go at creating a short speech about something that's important to you. As inspiration we're going to use this quote by John Wesley from a short book, or pamphlet, called 'Thoughts Upon Slavery', which he wrote in 1774.

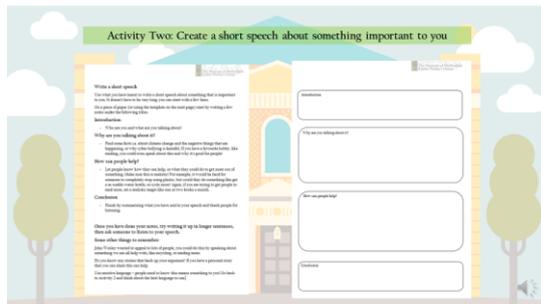
(Quote is read)

Slide 15



Once you have downloaded the sheet, you'll see there are four pages. The first page is a re-cap of some of the things we've talked about already, the quote is listed as well. I also want you to think about a time you've tried to persuade someone to change their mind or do something for you. The second page gives some examples of how John Wesley uses the language in the extract to try and persuade people to change their mind. Also, you'll need to think about a cause that is important to you that you want to speak about.

Slide 16



These are the last two pages of the activity sheet. The third page with the title 'Write a short speech' gives some tips to help you write your speech by dividing it into four sections and on the right hand side is a template that you're welcome to use, or alternatively, you can just use some paper. Perhaps start with a draft, put down some notes, and then write them up into full sentences.

Once you've finished you could ask someone in your house to listen to you and maybe you could ask them for feedback. Remember, you don't have to write a really long speech, it could just be a few lines, this activity is about practising using our voices and language to express different things and to try to get our argument across.

Slide 17



That's the end of the session, well done and thank you for taking part!

One question you might have is: did John Wesley make a difference? It wasn't until 1833 that the slave trade was fully abolished.

But I think the answer is yes, he did. Firstly, it's important to stand up for what you believe and John Wesley certainly did that throughout his life. Secondly, although it was 42 years after John died that the slave trade was abolished, by applying pressure and getting the public on side over several years, together the abolitionists did get the government to listen. Even though it took a long time, it was worth it in the end. Sometimes it can take a long time to persuade people in power to change, but it's important to continue to speak out about what we believe in.

Thanks again, and I hope you enjoyed the session.

*In 1807 the British Parliament passed the Slave Trade Act prohibiting the slave trade in the British Empire, which meant the transatlantic slave trade stopped but not slavery itself. 1833 saw the Slavery Abolition Act passed which made the purchase and ownership of slaves illegal in the British Empire. The latter date was chosen for this workshop as Wesley was opposed not just to the slave trade, but slavery itself.