
Westminster Abbey

Learning



Modern Martyrs: Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Born: 4th February 1906

Died: 9th April 1945

Occupation: Priest

Biography

He was born in Wroclaw (formerly Breslau) in Poland. From the age of 13, he went to church and when he was 18, he travelled to Rome to find out more about the Roman Catholic Church.

As a priest when Adolf Hitler was becoming more popular and the Nazi party more powerful, he was one of many Christians who were worried that this new style of politics went against the teachings of the Church. He believed people should live by God's grace by acting responsibly and avoiding sinful ways of living.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer worked with others who wanted to overthrow the Nazi government. He was arrested in March 1943 and was executed as a political prisoner on 9th April 1945, near the end of World War Two.

Activities

“Judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating.”

Discuss this quotation with a partner. What do you think Dietrich Bonhoeffer meant when he said these words? How does that make you feel?

“Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?”
(Matthew 7:1-3)

Discuss this Bible passage with a partner. How is this passage similar to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's quotation?

Write a paragraph about what people can learn from the behaviour and teachings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.





For teachers:

We recommend you read our "[Introducing Modern Martyrs: primary teachers' guide](#)" before using this activity sheet.

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