

Carol and Esther's Saturday morning

SLIDE

- 1 This is a story about two friends:
- 2 First, there's Carol, who lives in Edinburgh and works for the
Church of Scotland, and then there's
- 3 Esther, who lives in Malawi, a country in central Africa. Esther
works for the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.
- 4 Carol and Esther do a lot together to help people who are living
with a virus called HIV which can make people very ill.
- 5 Carol used to live in Malawi. Not so long ago, she visited
Esther to find out how things were going for her and her team
who do a lot to help people whose lives are affected by HIV.
- 6 They visited lots of people, and heard lots of stories.
- 7 Carol met many old friends,
- 8 and she made some new friends too.
- 9 Today, we're going to find out what Carol and Esther did on
one hot Saturday morning near the town of Ekwendeni in the
north of Malawi. Our story starts early on Saturday morning,
as the sun rose into the blue sky.
- 10 Carol called in on an old friend, Mrs Nyamkhata,
- 11 who looks after her grandson, Godfrey.
- 12 Mrs Nyamkhata makes beautiful beaded jewellery
- 13 from seeds which she picks from a bush outside her house, and
threads them together to make beautiful necklaces.
- 14 When she sells these necklaces, it helps her raise the money she
needs to buy all the things that she and her grandson need.
- 15 Carol would like to find out more, but it's time to go!
- 16 Off into the countryside drive Carol and Esther,
- 17 bouncing over dirt tracks in their pick-up truck.

18 Malawi can be a very dry place, and soon their truck is covered
in a layer of red dust.

19 They have travelled many kilometres to get to see another old
friend,

20 a young lady called Katie.

21 Life has not been easy for Katie because when she was very
young her Mum and Dad both died from a disease caused by the
HIV virus.

22 Carol also met Katie's brother, Mpopo. Over the years, Katie
and her brother have been helped by Esther and her team at
Ekwendeni Hospital.

23 Even though they live so far away, the Church is able to make
life a little easier for Katie and Mpopo, and that means a lot to
them. They have helped them out with school fees, and made
sure that they have enough to eat. Without this help, life would
have been even more difficult for them both.

24 There's no time to waste, so for Carol and Esther it's back into
the once again.

25 They drive and drive and drive, even seeing little children
playing on the sandy bed of a dried up river. In a few weeks, the
rains will come again and soon they will have their river back
once more!

26 After a while, Carol and Esther arrive at the house of Mrs
Nyirenda and her grandchildren.

27 One of the old lady's grand-daughters is called Beauty, and she
is training to become a nurse at Ekwendeni Hospital. Sadly,
once again, this is a young person whose parents both died a
long time ago because of HIV.

28 Things might have been very hard for Mrs Nyirenda and for
Beauty,
29 but the Church was able to help them in ways that made a big
difference to their lives. The children were able to go to school,
and the church community made sure the family had enough to
eat – they provided seeds, and even helped with the growing of
the food in the fields. This gave all the family real hope for the
future.
30 It's been a busy morning for Carol and Esther, but it's not over
yet!
31 Their pickup truck flies through the country, up and down rough
and rocky tracks, until it arrives at a very special place in the
village of Baula.
32 Carol and Esther want to see a very unusual youth club which
has been started specially for orphans in the area.
33 These clubs are called "Children's Corners" and they provide a
safe place for young people to come and have fun on a Saturday
morning.
34 But each one of these children is sad to have lost their parents,
and often they just need a place where they can be themselves
and chat with other people who will understand what they are
going through.
35 Older orphans are there to help the young ones,
36 and the younger orphans really like having them as friends who
can help them feel better about life.
37 Next, Esther tells Carol they need to get back in the truck,
38 to see another "Children's Corner" in the nearby village of
Zombwe.

39 The church is able to help many young people who have lost family members because of HIV.

40 One of the things Carol sees is a “memory book”, where a teenager has written all about his life, his family, and his plans for the future. Just by doing this, he tells Carol that he feels better about who he is.

41 At this Children’s Corner, the club members love to play,
42 and as well as getting things to do, they also get food and drink to keep them going in the hot Malawian sun.

43 Carol even finds a friend she has not seen for a long time. It’s good to say hello again!

44 What a busy morning, with so many people. There was Mrs Myamkhata and her grandson, Godfrey.

45 There was Katie and her brother, Mpopa.

46 There was Beauty and her grandmother, Mrs Nyirenda.

47 And last of all, there were all the girls and boys at the two “Children’s Corners”.

48 Carol and Esther have seen so many people, each one with a story to tell:

49 so many people who are being helped by the Church to live life to the full, even though they have known such sadness. Jesus wants everyone to know God’s love, and he wants us all to show the love that we have inside us. If we can work together, we can do just what he asks us to do, whether in Scotland or far round the world. And that kind of teamwork is a really great thing!