

# BB KNOWLEDGE

## MODULE 2: THE FOUNDER

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To share the life of Sir William Alexander Smith and lessons we can learn from his life.
- To share Sir William Alexander Smith's contributions to the works of The Boys' Brigade

### TEACHING BRIEF

Sir William Alexander Smith was born on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1854 at Pennyland, near Turso in Scotland. As a boy, Sir William was educated at the Miller Institution, known as the 'Thurso Academy'.

After his father's death when he was 13 years old, his family moved to Glasgow and he became a pupil in a private school called The Western Educational Institution. In his first and only term, he achieved 7 prizes and unfortunately, his school days were short-lived and ended at the age of fourteen and a half. However, Sir William continued learning French after joining his uncle's business as a whole sale merchant.

Both his grandfather and father were officers in the army and following his father's footsteps, he enrolled himself in the 1<sup>st</sup> Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers which was part of the local Volunteer Force. At the age of 19 years old, he was promoted to the rank of Lance-Corporal and he joined the Church of Scotland in the same year. Sir William was commissioned into the Rifle Volunteer in 1877 and promoted to Lieutenant later the same year. He eventually achieved the rank of Major in the Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers.

He also served his church as a Sunday school teacher and realized that the methods and discipline used at the Rifle Volunteer could be more effective when dealing with the Sunday school children; who were restless and bored during these classes. It was a combination of these two activities that led him to start The Boy's Brigade on 4 October 1883 at Free Church Mission Hall, North Woodside Road, Glasgow. In 1909, Sir William was knighted by King Edward VII for his service to the boys.

Sir William married Amelia Pearson Sutherland in March 1884 and lived at Ann Street in the West End area of Glasgow; within walking distance of the North Woodside Mission Hall. They had two sons; Stanley and Douglas.

The Boy's Brigade movement spread all over the United Kingdom and Sir William gave up his business job to devote himself to the work of the Brigade as first Brigade Secretary in 1887. He dedicated his time to providing a guide and manual on how to form a Company, known as 'The Little Red Book'. He also founded The Boys Gazette which was the Brigade's official monthly paper.

Sir William Alexander Smith died on Sunday, 10 May 1914 and was buried in the Western Necropolis in Glasgow. Over 7,000 Boys of the Glasgow Battalion and thousands of civilians paid tribute to Sir William at his funeral.

The Boys' Brigade celebrated its 125 years Anniversary in 2008 and today, it has more than half a million memberships around the globe. Sir William is best remembered as the man who spells Boy with a capital 'B' and he quoted:

*"If I am to be remembered by posterity I should like it to be as the man who taught people to spell Boy with a capital 'B'."*

"In every healthy Boy there is an inborn desire to be brave, true man, and if he fails to attain to this, it is too often from a perverted notion of what true bravery and true manliness really are. What we had to do was to take hold of this desire, and turn it into a right channel, through which it might frame to God's glory and his own good."

"What the Brigade seeks to do is to train up good, true Boys, well prepared, physically and morally, for the battle of life, in whatever sphere they may choose." It will thus be seen that the Brigade aims at taking all that enters into healthy Boy-Life, and consecrating it to the service of God."

*Sir William Alexander Smith*

## TEACHING IDEAS

### Slides Presentation / Video

- Power point Presentation or Videography about Sir William Alexander Smith's life and contributions to the works of The Boys' Brigade

### Short Skit / Drama Live / Role-play

- Act out the life and works of Sir William Alexander Smith. You may put in your own version without diverting from the fact to make it interesting and fun
- You may need to prepare a brief script for the students especially those who are younger

### Pictionary

- You may cut out pictures, photos, map of Scotland, dates or words related to Sir William Alexander Smith and use them as teaching tool – you may paste these pictures, photos or words on the board or a piece of cardboard as you teach the members.

## SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT

### PRE – JUNIOR

#### Option 1

- Let the members work in pairs. Provide each team with a Scotland map.
- Give them a time limit to complete the assignment
- Ask to plot the birthplace of Sir William Alexander Smith, where he lived as a boy, where he lived after his marriage, the church he served and the birthplace of The Boys' Brigade on the map

#### Option 2

- Ask the members to search for photos of Sir William Alexander Smith and his family. They may replace pictures with names if they are not able to get the required photos.
- Briefly draft out his family tree as well as the history of his life.

## **JUNIOR**

- Get the members to search for a map of Scotland and plot the following in the map:
  - The birthplace of Sir William Alexander, The place he lived in after marriage, The place and name of the church he served and The 1<sup>st</sup> Boys' Brigade Company
- In addition, ask them to write the biography of Sir William Alexander Smith in chronological format and lessons they can learn from his life such as commitment, hardworking, etc.
- You may want to ask them to do a presentation on the above.

*Please feel free to create your own assessment mode; accordingly to the age and maturity of the members.*