

ASSEMBLIES/COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Guidelines

School assemblies are usually short, sweet and to the point. You are likely to be given 10 or 15 minutes out of a total of 20 minutes allocated to the assembly. Adjust the material given in these assembly outlines to the necessary length. Make sure you stick to the time allocated to you; you will win no friends if you eat into the curriculum time.

Ask the school if they usually sing songs or hymns in assembly and if so, get them to suggest one that the children know well and that fits the theme.

Don't ever embarrass children by putting them on the spot, showing them up in front of their friends or by joking about a mistake they made. Several of these assemblies ask you to get children out to the front to participate. You will probably have plenty of volunteers, but once they stand up they may suddenly realise that all eyes are on them. You can do a lot to affirm them and encourage them to participate.

Always thank the children for participating and get them to sit down once their contribution has ended. You don't want to leave them up there feeling awkward while you explain the point of the assembly.

Ask the school what routine they have with respect to prayer; you may like to use this so that it's familiar to children. For example, in some schools a candle will be lit at the beginning of a prayer and extinguished at the end. A good phrase to use to prepare children for prayer is 'Let's be still on the inside and still on the outside.' Don't use the traditional and outdated 'Hands together and eyes closed!' You can't assume that all children will want to join in the prayer. You can explain that you are going to pray and invite those that want to join you to say 'Amen' at the end.

Opening prayer

You may like to say this prayer at the beginning of each assembly, particularly if you are going into the school more than once. Children love repetition and it will help to frame what you are doing in the school.

Dear God

Open our ears to listen carefully to the story of Easter.

Open our minds to understand what it means for us.

Open our hearts to receive your love and to share that love with others.

Amen.