

10 Tips for School Assemblies



1. Have a focal point with Christian symbol for example a cross. If you haven't a cross – why not create one. Here is one made with the finger prints of all the people (children and adults) in the school community. In a smaller school you could have handprints around the cross shape.

The cross on the right highlights the values important to the school community.



Question: What do the children look at in school assembly each day/ week?

2. Build up some anticipation for Assembly. Advertise the theme of the week on a noticeboard/ app or social media. You could include information about the songs that will be sung or a place for prayers to be added or the names of the children/ teachers who will be reading or a question for the children to think about.



Question: Would advertising our school assembly give the message that it is planned and important to our school community?

3. Plan Assemblies for the term. Follow themes, include class assemblies, share responsibility, think about how you might involve children in planning and organizing. There is a list of possible themes on the Follow Me website and a calendar email is sent to schools. Where classes will lead assemblies then set school guidelines, especially for new teachers. Try and avoid stress- a class assembly could be as easily led by a class created and designed powerpoint as by a drama presentation.

Question: Would planning for the term help make sure that assemblies are positive times of learning and worship?

4. Have a focal table for assembly. You might light an LED candle at the start of assembly as a way to start in a sense of calm and peace. You could drape the



table in the Church Year Colours – green for most of the year, purple for Advent and Lent. A white cloth is used after Christmas till Epiphany and after Easter till Ascension (40 days). Could a pupil/ pupils take responsibility for preparing the table?

Question: Could we involve pupils in assembly planning and organisation?

5. Think about how you will sit/ stand. Could you plan some variation over the term- e.g. sometimes younger children sit with older children (buddies). Could the children sit so they can see each other – e.g. in a semi circle? Where will the teachers/ staff members sit/stand so they are seen as participants in the worship and not outsiders/ onlookers?

Question: How might we change our assembly space to encourage all to engage positively?

6. Choose music to listen to as well as to sing. A class could sing a song they have learned in RE. Pupils could be involved in selecting songs for assembly. Think about the words of the songs and check they make sense to the children. Remember you could sing one verse rather than all the verses. Involve children who play instruments as accompanists.



Question: Can we add more variety into our choice of music for assembly? What resources do we need?

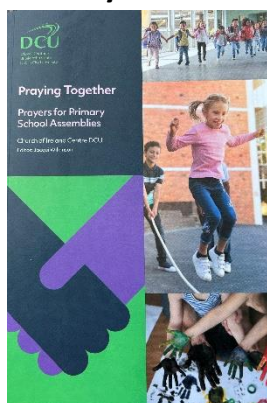
7. Bible stories can be read by children or teachers. When preparing the story see if it needs a sentence introduction – for example: is this an Old Testament story (a story Jesus would have heard) or a story about Jesus or a story Jesus told. You could pose a question for those hearing the story to listen out for? Then after the story ask a few simple questions – but include questions that start ‘I wonder....’ or ‘How do you think X felt’ or ‘What would you have done’ . In this way you are exploring the story and not just dropping it as a closed narrative. If big questions come up – then acknowledge they are big questions that may not have easy answers.



That's OK to do – it's important children realise faith is about exploring big questions.

Question: Do we think about how the children will understand the stories we read- what needs to be said to set the context and enable engagement and interpretation?

8. Prayers can be written or read by children or teachers.



The Praying Together book has been re-printed. There are copies available from Jacqui (address at the end of the document). Make sure prayers are relevant and understandable. Include prayers for things going on in the school/ local community/ world – even if it's just to mention them. You can have reflection – an image and silence with an invitation for personal silent prayer. Silence and reflection is good.

Question: Do I have the Praying Together book available for anyone leading assembly? Do we make sure our choice of prayers is relevant to what the assembly and to world or local events?

9. End the worship part of assembly – turn off the candle. Say the Lord's Prayer or closing prayer. Then move to school announcements/ awards etc. Have the worship element as a defined time.

Question: How do we make sure that the worship part of assembly does not take second place to awards and school announcement?

10. Plan that your school assemblies are Christian worship, that they provide for meaningful spiritual time in a special spiritual space. See them as a time to focus on God, and to pray as a whole school community. This part of the school timetable is core to the characteristic spirit/ ethos and Christian heritage of the school.



Question: Do we check in with children and adults as to how they feel school assembly is fulfilling these criteria? Can we set some simple targets to update our school assembly format?

**For more resources/ training needs contact Jacqui Wilkinson
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