

Leading Collective Worship (or an assembly) on behalf of the local church is a great opportunity. You can share something of God's love and the Christian faith with children. Therefore, it's vital that we give it prayer, thought and consideration before jumping in!

## What is Collective Worship?

Collective Worship is a term used for school assemblies. All schools in England must have a daily act of worship which must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character'. Schools have different approaches, but many value the input of local churches in providing their pupils the opportunity to explore and engage with Christian teaching, values and experience, whilst being able to reflect on their own beliefs.

## School expectations

Every school will have a different pattern of collective worship, and different expectations for guests. Find out how they like to do things, and whether they expect you to do the same. Secondary schools will likely do assemblies very differently, and student will perhaps not be used to having visitors leading.

## How to lead Collective Worship

### Music

You can use music in different ways in your assembly.

- Play calming music as the children come in to the hall to set the tone of the assembly.
- Play a video or song as a reflective element of your assembly, perhaps alongside or instead of a prayer—especially in non-church schools, this may be a more inclusive way of encouraging the children to reflect on what you've shared without praying.
- Often schools have a repertoire of songs they know and sing regularly. Action songs can be particularly popular. It's a good idea to ask the school if you want to introduce something new.
- Secondary school students are unlikely to want to sing, but may be up for listening to a well chosen song.

## Top tips for good delivery

- Practice! Try and lead your assembly/tell a story without a script
- Play to your own strengths. Share what you're passionate about, use your skills, tell stories about your own life that others can relate to.
- Keep to time. If the bell rings or you speak for too long you will lose the room.
- If you are using images, audio or video technology, make sure you know what you are doing and have a back up for if it goes wrong!

## Useful links and information

Scan the QR code for a range of links to websites with school assembly resources and ideas, as well as diocesan and Government guidance on Collective Worship.





## Other things to consider

- Always arrive in good time so there's time to set up, meet staff, build relationships and test any tech you may want to use before the children arrive.
- Check the dress code- it may or may not be ok to wear jeans and a t-shirt to lead assembly!
- Do you have a back up plan? What will you cut if you're running short on time? What will you do if something doesn't work properly?
- Pray! And then pray some more. Pray as you prepare, as you go in, when you arrive, and when you leave.

## Praying

- It is often appropriate to begin and end your act of worship with a prayer. The school may have some set prayers the children know, which you could invite them to say together.
- It's a good idea to invite the children to listen and say 'amen' at the end if they want to make the prayer their own. Avoid asking children to repeat lines of a prayer they haven't used before.

## How to lead Collective Worship

Scan the QR code for more advice and guidance from the Go Team



## Content preparation and planning

- Every assembly or act of worship needs a beginning, middle and end. You should also have an aim or a point that you want the children or young people to remember.
- You may want to start with a question to get the children thinking, or share a story that they can relate to which introduces the theme.
- If you ask a question or want to do audience participation, be prepared for chatter! Come up with a way to get everyone to be quiet and pay attention again (especially in secondary schools where they might not be so used to audience participation in assembly).
- Your main message needs to be engaging! Bible stories using props and volunteer 'actors' or audience participation can help keep children engaged with your content.
- You may want to use a current news story or something from history to illustrate your point.
- Don't forget to repeat your main point a few times to make it memorable.

## Themes

Some times of year lend themselves to easy themes: Christian festivals, world events etc.

Some schools may have a particular set of values that they want to focus on in their collective worship.

You may want to choose a theme for a half term or term (depending how regularly you visit) such as Jesus' teachings, or 'the fruits of the Spirit'.

