

## Introduction

Assemblies offer the time and space needed to help create, nurture and sustain a sense of community and promote a positive school ethos. An assembly is an opportunity for the school community to come together to explore, raise awareness, think critically, pose questions, reflect and be inspired to take positive action.

Assemblies also provide good opportunities for fostering links with the wider school community by inviting in individuals to give advice and enrich the assembly, for example, people giving testimonies, a storyteller or performer, a local expert or local NGO worker.

Involving pupils in the preparation and delivery of assemblies offers pupils opportunities to build on and demonstrate their skills in art, drama, public speaking etc.

## Assemblies, visitors and global learning

Assemblies also offer important opportunities for global learning. There is a rich array of resources available, particularly from charities or other organisations, for promoting global learning in assemblies. Community members, agencies and other guests can be invited to deliver assemblies based on their unique experiences or insights into particular global issues or themes. Examples might include storytellers, artists or theatre groups that produce work exploring global themes, or agencies such as Traidcraft or UNICEF who can talk about issues such as Fair trade or Child Rights. Assemblies can also be a time to give presentations created in school or show films on global issues. Family members or contacts children in the school may have can also share different aspects of their religion or culture; parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles etc may have particularly interesting experiences to share. Such opportunities enable children to increase their confidence and pride in their own cultural identity and family backgrounds.

## Outcomes for Pupils

- To give pupils a sense of the wider world, and highlight links and connections between different places and between our lives and the lives of others.
- To create a sense of wonder and excitement about the world in which we live
- To appreciate that differences and similarities between people occur due to cultural, ethnic, racial and religious diversity, gender, sexuality and disability.
- To celebrate and respect differences and similarities between people and ways of life.
- To develop a sense of social justice and moral responsibility and begin to understand that their own choices and behaviour can affect local, national or global issues.
- To reflect on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences to identify opportunities for taking action to make the world a better and fairer place

## Assemblies: a global calendar approach

There are many days and weeks throughout the year which mark or celebrate specific global themes or issues and these form an excellent basis for mapping out assemblies throughout the year. Examples include Fairtrade Fortnight, World Environment Day, World Refugee Day/ Week, International Day of Peace, Black History Month and Universal Children's Day. There are also many religious festivals that offer opportunities for appreciation of cultural diversity. A Global calendar can be found on the global dimension website: [www.globaldimension.org.uk/calendar](http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/calendar) with so many opportunities, schools should pick those days/weeks that most effectively:

- reflect and promote a positive school ethos
- build on or link with the school curriculum
- meet the needs of pupils in the local context, e.g. best meets the needs for pupils to learn about and understand cultural and religious diversity
- challenge negative attitudes and values
- inspire action and bring about positive change.

Assemblies also provide excellent opportunities to draw on the insights and experiences provided by the school community. Individuals could give advice or enrich the assembly through personal testimonies; storytellers or performers or local experts on particular themes could be invited and a Development Education Centre worker or local NGO worker could help in planning and delivering the assemblies.

*Our assemblies... are an important feature of our school's life. They act as one of the main ways by which we create our positive reflective ethos and promote our values-based education.*

Headteacher

## Creating meaningful and effective assemblies

The following set of reflective questions serves as a helpful checklist for creating meaningful and effective global learning assemblies.

Do school assemblies:

- Foster a sense of community and promote a positive school ethos?
- Build on or link to the school curriculum and classroom activities?
- Use images, film clips, artefacts, stories etc selected carefully to challenge assumptions and stereotyping?
- Ensure positive representations of religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, age and ability?
- Focus on commonality as well as celebrating diversity?
- Enhance critical thinking skills and encourage questioning?
- Make connections between pupils' lives and the lives of others?
- Make explicit the connections between actions and their consequences; between our own actions and the lives of others?
- Lead children to think about the causes and consequences of injustice and inequalities?
- Challenge and inspire children to take positive action?
- Provide opportunities for links with the local community?
- Involve children in planning, preparing and delivering assemblies?
- Have an on-going monitoring and evaluation process to inform and improve future assemblies?

## Monitoring & Evaluation: how do you know it's working?

The impact of assemblies can be difficult to assess but should be noticeably impacting on the way pupils approach a particular theme or topic, and should of course engage pupils as an audience.

## Thematic Links

**Global Calendar:** [www.globaldimension.org.uk/calendar](http://www.globaldimension.org.uk/calendar)

**Oxfam assemblies:** <http://tinyurl.com/6jpzo8g> assemblies on themes such as justice, equity, and sustainability; includes assembly calendar.

**Christian Aid primary assemblies:** <http://tinyurl.com/5vlezqy> an extensive list of assemblies which take a multi-faith approach on many different global issues.

**Traidcraft assemblies:** <http://tinyurl.com/4fo3k2g> using Fair trade as a way of exploring human rights, interdependence and global citizenship.

**Festivals of World Religions assemblies:** <http://tinyurl.com/4pyoqy3>

**Teachernet** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/assemblies](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/assemblies) use the search facility for assemblies related to global themes. Try words and phrases such as *global, child rights, diversity, justice, peace, conflict, community cohesion*.

## Effective global learning assemblies: practical example

Here is one example of what an assembly that delivers effective global learning might look like.

### Martin Luther King Day assembly (suitable for Year 3-6).

The assembly begins by examining different coloured eggs (to include white and brown) Volunteers carefully observe the eggs and are asked to describe differences. The eggs are opened up. Children can be asked what they notice now. While the eggs are different on the outside, they are the same on the inside, just like people (*To appreciate that differences and similarities between people occur due to cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, gender and disability.*)

Explain that Martin Luther King lived in the USA about 40 years ago when things were very different.

Give examples of some of the discriminatory laws of the time, e.g. that white and black children couldn't go to school together. Ask the children to consider what they would feel like if they were told they could not come to school because they had brown hair, were a girl etc.

Explain that Martin Luther King spoke to many different people and taught them to stand up and say that the laws were wrong.

Emphasise that he used words and peaceful methods to solve problems and that when people worked together they were able to change the laws. (*To celebrate and respect differences and similarities between people and ways of life; to develop a sense of social justice; to identify opportunities for taking action to make the world a fairer place.*)

Global Learning Centre



Promoting Global Learning in Schools

**Learning in a Global Context** is a framework for supporting schools in preparing young people for life in an increasingly globalised world.

### Global Learning Centre

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Details of current teacher training, information on global learning and examples of HEC's work [www.globallearninglondon.org.uk](http://www.globallearninglondon.org.uk)

Join the London Global Teacher Network - LGTN offers London teachers the chance to connect around global learning. [www.lgtn.org.uk](http://www.lgtn.org.uk)



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