

Active Assemblies for Every Week

for SEAL



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How to use this book

The *Active Assemblies for Every Week* collection is arranged in themes that reflect the guidance materials for Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) from the Primary National Strategy. These include: new beginnings, getting on and falling out, say no to bullying, going for goals, good to be me, relationships, and changes. There is only one example assembly in the SEAL guidance. Active Assemblies provides a rich resource of different approaches to each theme, to provide inspiring assemblies which reinforce the ethos of happy, effective schools.

Every school is a community in which individuals study and play together as members of an interdependent group whose purpose is to achieve common goals. Successful schools recognise that solidarity is impossible without shared values and moral beliefs and they build a strong sense of community by paying active attention to the kinds of social order and cooperation that they wish to encourage and promote. High quality assemblies enable everybody in the community to come together to learn about and understand the values and ambitions that underpin your school ethos and to prepare children to live as successful members of our wider society.

Assemblies have a special rhythm of their own that sets them apart from ordinary lessons. The combination of drama and reverence, interaction and solitary reflection makes a daily ritual that is a vital and life enhancing part of each and every school day. They offer children an opportunity to reflect upon their rights and responsibilities as members of a social group that is so much more than a sum of its parts. During assembly, adults are able to communicate the school's vision and to model the values and skills that they wish children to emulate. Younger children learn about the roles they will play as they progress through the school because they are shown the way by older pupils.

This book will show you how to deliver meaningful assemblies that will engage your pupils and get them thinking. The 36 assemblies are designed to teach a range of universal values and skills that will help you to create a culture of success and harmony by teaching sensitivity to the needs of others alongside self-awareness. Children can learn how to behave as members of a purposeful

community. You will be able to deliver assemblies with confidence and charisma, capture attention and model thinking skills and reflection in ways that are accessible to a wide range of children. You can relate your school values to children's real, lived, experience by planning assemblies that are uniquely suited to your particular school.

The assemblies in this book follow a three-step structure: opening, development and reflection. Each stage is explained and model scripts, in italics, are offered to deliver the key points which can be adapted as you wish.

RE and the curriculum

The Education Act (1944) requires that Collective Worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' but that the precise nature will depend on 'the family background, ages and abilities of pupils'. Each assembly in this book is designed to teach social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and are arranged to fit in with QCA guidelines. They are not, as they stand, acts of Collective Worship. They do, however, reflect moral values and behaviours that are consistent with religious teaching because they stress the importance of caring for one another alongside the experience of quiet contemplation. The opening and reflective phases of each assembly can be adapted to incorporate worship and prayer by small changes in the wording in accordance with your policy for Collective Worship. For example, the reflection can be altered to include thanks to God and requests for his help in achieving a harmonious world and can then be used as prayers.

Getting Ready

Excellent assemblies require thorough preparation. You need to read through each 'script' before you begin and check that it is appropriate for your particular school. Don't be afraid to make changes to suit your needs. Make sure that you have collected all the equipment that will be required and that CD players and electrical equipment are plugged in and ready to use. Most importantly, think carefully about the theme so that it is uppermost in your mind throughout assembly time – this is the point of the meeting and you must never lose sight of it.

Getting on and falling out

Working together and playing together is not always easy, as every school knows. There are rules and codes to help everyone get along, but there are also social skills that need to be developed as we grow. This section looks at friendship and how we can work together as a group to help to solve conflicts when things go wrong.

'What's on the menu?' explores the qualities that we look for in a friend – what do we want from a friend and what can we give? It also asks children to consider the characteristics that we don't really want!

Appreciating and accepting another's point of view is an important part of getting along as a community. 'The way I see it' and 'The caucus race' give clear illustrations of the difference between fact and opinion. Children can begin to appreciate that even though people don't always see things in the same way we can respect their views.

Of course, things don't always go to plan. There are bad days and good days and, much of the time, a mix of both! You can use 'The rough with the smooth' to help children to look for the positive points in a situation and take a level-headed view when things are less than perfect.

'Break friends, make friends' uses a story from the Bible to explore the theme of forgiveness. Everyone spurned Zacchaeus, but Jesus took the time to focus on the good in him which led to a new start for everyone.

This section closes with a reminder of those little phrases that help any group to work together – those rules and guidelines that can help stop disputes before they begin. 'A few of my useful things' will deliver the message that rules have an important function and can make life easier for all.

The way I see it



Focus

To encourage respect for differing points of view.



You will need

A large box: draw something different on each of the four vertical faces, such as a black square, a picture of a horse, a yellow star, a blue circle; a black plastic bin-liner; a low table.



Opening

Put the box inside the plastic bag so that nobody can see it. Place the table in the middle of the hall so that the children can sit all around it. Take the bag to the centre of the hall, put it on the table and remove the bag. Point to children facing different parts of the box and ask them what they can see on the box from where they are sitting.

You can all see very different things, can't you? What you can see depends on where you are sitting. Nobody is 'wrong'. You can see things from your position. We call this your viewpoint, standpoint or point of view.



Development

Role-play a situation that demonstrates that there are often many different viewpoints about the same thing. You may want to think about a scenario that is relevant to your particular setting, or use the following example:

In Rainbow Street there are four houses.

Mrs Yellow lives in number One. She is very old and she finds it hard to walk all the way to the High Street to get her shopping.

Mr and Mrs Green live in number Two with their four children, Arthur, Aiden,

Alan and Alex. They are all mad about football.

Mr Blue lives in number Three. He is an artist and he likes to paint the view from his house.

Miss Red lives in number Four. Her hobby is swimming but she hates having to drive 20 miles to the nearest swimming pool.

Across the road from the four houses there is a big empty field. One day a man came to Rainbow Street and knocked on each door. He asked the people inside what they would like the Council to do with the big empty field.

Ask for suggestions (or role-play) points of view that might be expressed by each household.

Tell the children that this story doesn't have an ending yet. The man from the council wrote down everyone's point of view in a big notebook and he has promised to let them know soon. They are all waiting for the postman.

What do you think the council will decide? Has the council got an easy job or a hard job to decide between the choices of people with such different points of view? Imagine what their job would be like if there were 20 houses in Rainbow Street!

Thank the children for all their different contributions and different points of view.

Reflection

Every single person in the world is different from every other person. Some people are rich and some people are poor. Some people live as part of a family with brothers and sisters and some people are 'only' children. Some people are old and some people are just little tiny babies in their pushchairs. Every one of us has a different way of looking at the world. Each of us has our own very special point of view. We should try to listen to everyone's point of view and help them to listen to our point of view. We can live together peacefully and happily.