

Assembly resources for Anti-Bullying Week

The Anti-Bullying Alliance has commissioned a series of six assembly plans on issues around bullying, designed especially for use during Anti-Bullying Week.

Introduction

The plans have been written by **Ann Lovelace**, author of several well-known assembly guides published by Heinemann. The assemblies were developed from ideas suggested by young people in secondary and special schools and are based on the principle of maximum student participation.

Each assembly involves students taking an active role and uses a mixture of narration and mime. The materials include a full script and suggestions for props and resources and involve students taking an active role and using a mixture of narration and mime. The materials include a full script and suggestions for props and resources.

Titles and themes

1. *The same old story* – bullying in fiction and real life
2. *Lostphobia: the virus* – afraid to go to school
3. *A friend in need* – group bullying
4. *Taking control* – peer support
5. *Take that back!* - saying sorry
6. *Beyond the colour* – a reflection on Stephen Lawrence and racial prejudice

Notes for teachers by Ann Lovelace

I have sought and received inspiration from a number of young people before setting out to write these assemblies. They, of course are the experts and I am indebted to them for sharing with me their thoughts and, sometimes painful, experiences.

Format

Those teachers among you who have used my *Practical Assembly Guide, 80 More Practical Assemblies and Assembly Solutions*, published by Heinemann, will be familiar with my use of narration and mime, which allows for minimum preparation and maximum pupil participation. The assemblies in this pack follow the same format. Although the allocation of lines has been prescribed for specific numbers of readers, these of course can be re-arranged to suit different needs and preferences. Similarly, where a teacher-led approach is preferred, the dialogue can be easily adapted for one voice. To give students as much ownership of the assemblies as possible, teachers are urged to add or substitute their own students' poems and reflections.

Drama

The prescribed use of mime to accompany the narrative is optional, but adds important visual and dramatic interest. Instructions are given and no special expertise in drama on the part of teacher or students is required. Simplicity and sincerity are key. When preparation time is not an issue, participants may prefer to change the format so that words are learned and the scenes are acted out as straight drama. Many students are used to acting and will be confident with this approach. However, assemblies are different from classroom situations where role-play is part of the learning process and where it is acceptable for acting to be unscripted. Such improvisation can be hit or miss and is not recommended in assemblies where it is important to know that the message stays on course and the dignity of the occasion preserved.

Response and reflection

For the most part, the assembly material is secular, allowing teachers to make their own decisions about the inclusion of specific religious content. The expertise and resources of the RE department can be enlisted for this. Whatever is added, or whether the assemblies remain as written, it is important for there to be the opportunity for response. This might be through prayer, poetry, silent reflection or guided listening. The use of projected visual images can also play an important role in aiding reflection. Suitable ones can easily be found, but for those concerned with copyright issues, the help of the drama department can be used in the setting up of tableaux, which can be photographed in-house.

Music

Music is an essential tool in assemblies to create mood and aid reflection. Suggestions have been made in each assembly as to when and how it can enhance the words and actions, although the choices of music have been left for schools themselves to make. It is important to seek advice from the experts – not just from the obvious source of the music department - but from the students themselves.

Part of the whole

The assemblies are not intended to stand in isolation, something to think about and then be forgotten. They should be an integral part of a vigorous and ongoing strategy to create a safer school environment for children and young people, free from bullying, violence and aggression.

Your assembly

We don't charge for the assembly plans but we would love to know how you get on using these materials. Please email your feedback to the Anti-Bullying Alliance at aba@ncb.org.uk