

Assembly: Remembrance Day



War Memorials Trust

Outline: This assembly covers the background to Remembrance Day and could be particularly useful as an introduction to this subject for younger pupils. Pupils will learn when Remembrance Day takes place, what it commemorates and some things that take place during Remembrance events. It could be used in isolation in November or could be adapted for use throughout the year as an introduction to more focused sessions on war memorials (suggestions for which are given in other assemblies and lesson plans from War Memorials Trust). This assembly plan tells you what information should be included in your assembly. You may wish to adapt the format depending on the number and age of the pupils involved.

Suggested timing: 20 to 30 minutes

Suitable for: Key Stages 1 and 2

Resources: 'Remembrance Day' primary assembly PowerPoint. Other visual aids such as poppies may be helpful if available. If displaying a PowerPoint is not possible large photographs like those shown in the PowerPoint could be used.

Suggested teaching:

Introduction:

- Introduce the assembly and concept of remembering and marking special days by asking pupils what specific dates they remember well and why those dates are special to them (e.g. their birthday).
- Tell pupils 11th November is an important date and why this is (if using this assembly around that time you could ask them if they have seen anything different happening, steering them towards answers such as seeing poppies being sold and worn, hearing about Remembrance services etc.). You may wish to have some visual aids such as poppies or pictures of Remembrance services to encourage answers. Some examples are given on slide 2 of the PowerPoint.
- Through pupils' answers, explain that 11th November is known as Remembrance Day and that in this assembly they are going to learn why this is a special day.

Key question 1: What do we remember on Remembrance Day?

- Slide 2: ask pupils what they think is happening in the picture of the Remembrance service and in particular what/who is being remembered.
- Through their answers and subsequent discussion establish that Remembrance Day is a time to think about and remember the people who have died in or been affected by wars.
- Slide 3: Explain that it happens on 11th November because this is when the First World War ended in 1918 (you may wish to briefly explain some basic information about the First World War such as how long it lasted and how many countries/people were involved, to give pupils an idea of its importance. Some key information is given on the PowerPoint) and that on the

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first anniversary of the end of the war people marked it to remember the people who had been killed, and this tradition of remembering has continued to the present day. The photograph on the PowerPoint slide shows the service at the unveiling of the Cenotaph in London in 1920.

- Now, 11th November is now also seen as a time to remember or think about those involved in subsequent wars as well (you may wish to go into more detail here about which wars are remembered and when they took place).
- Explain **why** we continue to remember past wars and the people involved in them. The detail you go into here may vary according to the age and experience of your pupils. As a minimum they should understand that the World Wars involved a huge number of people, including many who were killed, and many think those people should be remembered.
- Older pupils could also be told about the impact the First World War had on the wider population and aspects of their lives, and that many remember the wars for this reason too.

Key question 2: What happens on Remembrance Day?

- Having established when Remembrance Day is and what it is for, ask pupils what they think happens on Remembrance Day – what do people do to help them remember the wars and the people involved in them?
- You may wish to adapt this section depending on what you know your pupils' experiences to be – some communities involve young people a great deal in Remembrance services so you may be able to draw on this and what your pupils know. However you choose to approach it, pupils should understand some of the key symbols and events that are associated with Remembrance Day such as the selling and wearing of poppies, attending special Remembrance services, laying poppies at war memorials and observing two minutes silence at 11 o'clock (and why 11 o'clock is significant). You could return to slide 1 and use the pictures to help explain some of these.
- Slide 4: Ask pupils if they know why the poppy is used as a symbol of Remembrance and explain the reasons behind this using the poem 'In Flanders Fields'. An older child could be chosen to read this out if you feel it appropriate.

Conclusion

- Sum up the key points from the assembly and encourage pupils to think, when Remembrance Day occurs, about what it means. If Remembrance Day is coming up you could encourage them to consider how they behave during the silence at 11 o'clock and what they might reflect on during that time.

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