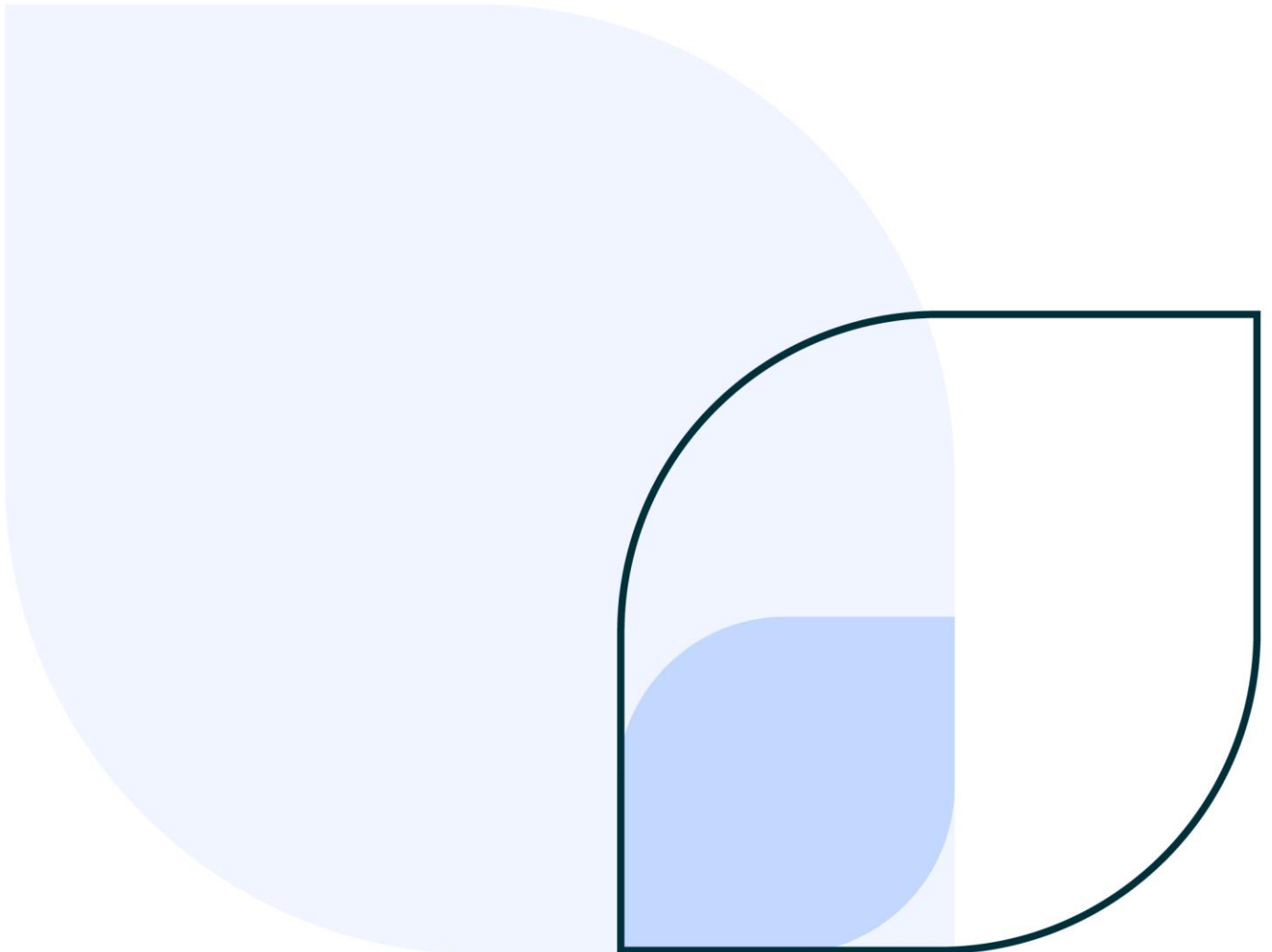


# Collective Worship

Primary resources:

I will weep when you are weeping





## Key Concept / Message

On Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024 an attack took place at a dance group in Southport, a seaside town in the North West of England. Thirteen adults and children were hurt in the attack, and sadly three of the children died.

The community of Southport was devastated by this attack and the families of the three children are shocked and grieving.

In the days that followed the awful events in Southport, misinformation was spread about the person who carried out the attack in Southport. There were demonstrations across England and Northern Ireland. During some of these events people, including police officers, were injured, and shops, advice centres, places of worship and libraries were badly damaged. People experienced racial abuse. This has led to community members being very frightened in some parts of our country. Many people are also worried because they have seen images of the violence and anger on the TV or social media.

This act of worship for primary pupils focusses on what people need when sad things have happened and how we should best respond. The story of Jesus weeping at the grave of Lazarus is used to demonstrate that he went to be with his friends, Mary and Martha and shared in their grief. We reflect too on those who reacted positively in the aftermath of the events in the UK this summer and showed kindness, support and solidarity to those who were grieving and hurt.

Schools may wish to adapt this material to suit their local context, particularly if affected directly by events that have taken place.

## Gathering

### Slide 2

Begin with your usual greeting to gather everyone together. You may like to start with an opening prayer, such as this one:

Dear God

We gather here together as your children in this place.

We thank you for our lives, our community and our school.

Be present among us as we think about others. Especially those who are sad, worried, or grieving at this time.

Thank you for the comfort, peace and hope that you bring us.

Amen



## Bible Passage

### Slide 3

Introduce the bible story for the children (John 11: 28-36)

Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were friends of Jesus who lived together in a town called Bethany. Lazarus was very sick and his sisters had sent a message asking Jesus to visit them. Jesus goes to be with them, but when he arrives Lazarus has already died and Mary and Martha are very upset.

### Jesus weeps for his friend

Martha... went back and called her sister Mary privately. "The Teacher is here," she told her, "and is asking for you." When Mary heard this, she got up and hurried out to meet him. (Jesus had not yet arrived in the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him.) The people who were in the house with Mary comforting her, followed her when they saw her get up and hurry out. They thought that she was going to the grave to weep there.

Mary arrived where Jesus was, and as soon as she saw him, she fell at his feet. "Lord," she said, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died!"

Jesus saw her weeping, and he saw how the people with her were weeping also; his heart was touched, and he was deeply moved. "Where have you buried him?" he asked them.

"Come and see, Lord," they answered.

Jesus wept. "See how much he loved him!" the people said.

## Engagement

### Slide 4

What kind of things make us feel sad?

Ask the children to recall times when they have been sad and what made them sad. Be sensitive to the group and gather their suggestions.

**I wonder - when you have felt sad – what sorts of things have helped you?**

Gather the children's suggestions.

### Slide 5

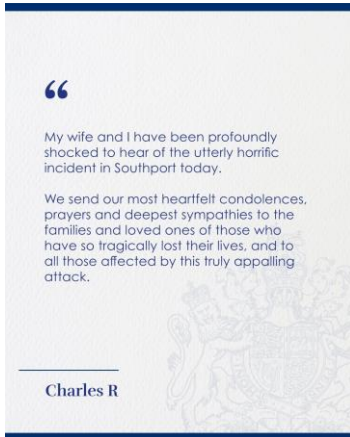
Explain that some sad events took place during the summer holidays. Many children may have heard about these on the news.

On Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July an attack took place at a dance group in Southport, a seaside town in the North West of England. Eleven adults and children were hurt in the attack, and sadly three of the children died. Their names were Bebe King, Elsie Dot Stancombe and Alice Dasilva Aguiar.



The community of Southport was devastated by this attack and the families of the three children are shocked and grieving.

Many people have sent messages of support for the families. Among these were messages from King Charles and Queen Camilla and the Prince and Princess of Wales.



**I wonder – when people are very sad – what sorts of things can help them?**

Gather the children’s ideas.

### Slide 6

In the days that followed the awful events in Southport, misinformation was spread about the person who carried out the attack in Southport. There were demonstrations across England and Northern Ireland. During some of these events people, including police officers, were injured, and shops, advice centres, places of worship and libraries were badly damaged. People experienced racial abuse. This has led to community members being very frightened in some parts of our country. Many people are also worried because they have seen images of the violence and anger on the TV or social media.

**I wonder – when communities and people are hurting – what our response should be?**

### Slide 7

When people are sad and grieving, sometimes the most important thing we can do is to sit with them in their sadness and their grief. Giving them space and time.

Sometimes, too, there are practical things that we can do to help people. In recent weeks there have been many examples of people responding well and standing alongside those who are hurting.

In Southport builders volunteered their time to rebuild walls around gardens and a mosque that had been destroyed during protests.

In many places people came together to sweep up the mess in the streets and make their neighbourhoods look and feel safe again.

In other places people stood in the way of protesters to protect homes and places of worship.



King Charles sent a message that praised people who were helping each other and showing what a caring and compassionate community looks like. [King Charles hails community spirit against riot 'aggression' - BBC News](#)

### Slide 8

In our bible story, Jesus went to be with Mary and Martha when they were sad. He spent time with them. He saw how sad they and the other people were and he, too was sad. The story tells us that Jesus wept.

While it is natural to feel angry and confused when bad things happen, it is never right to hurt others or destroy things. Rather, it is a time to come together.

In the bible story, people said about Jesus: “see how much he loved him!”

**I wonder... how might we follow Jesus' example and show love to those around us who are sad, hurting or afraid?**

## Response

### Prayer

Invite the children to join with you in prayer:

In invite you to join with me in a prayer. For Christians, prayer is talking to God, who they believe listens and hears their prayers. If you want to make this prayer your own, then please join me in saying, **'Amen'**.

Heavenly Father, we pray for all in our country who are sad at this time.

We pray for the family and friends of those who died and those who were injured in Southport.

We pray for all who have been affected by violence and hatred, and all who are afraid.

Help us all to embrace each other as children of one family and show us how to support one another through difficult times. Help us to be peacemakers and to show love to those around us.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Song

Sing a reflective song that is known to the children. One suggestion is: *Brother, sister let me Serve You / Will you let me be your servant*. If the children do not know this song they could listen to a [recording](#) and reflect on the words “I will weep when you are weeping”.

You may like to play the reflective song again as the children leave the worship space.



# Spiritual Development

## Practical ways to help us explore faith and develop spiritually at home and school together

### Experiences that can help us encounter:

#### **Celebrating Differences Booklet**

Create a class booklet where each student contributes a page on what makes them unique. This could be through written stories, poems or art. Children could consider the following questions:

- What is something that makes you feel proud of who you are?
- How do your beliefs or values influence the way you see the world?
- What is a talent or skill that you have that others might not know about?
- How do you celebrate your identity?
- How does your uniqueness contribute to making your class or school community a better place?

#### **Create an Inclusive Community Tree**

Students write about or draw ways to help create a kind and caring school and community environment and place them on a tree display. This could be displayed in classrooms or on a centralised school display.

### Activities that can develop practices and habits:

#### **Daily Gratitude and Reflection Journal**

Encourage students to write daily reflections on acts of supporting each other they noticed or performed, and how it made them feel.

#### **Weekly Inclusion Reflections**

Incorporate weekly class reflections where students discuss what they did that week to support each other and what they can do better next time.

### Conversations which connect communities

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“Do your little bit of good where you are; it’s those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.” Desmond Tutu

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#### **Personal Reflection:**

- How can small acts of kindness make a difference in your school or community?
- Why is it important to act even when the problems seem too big to solve alone?
- How can you use your voice to support others within your community?
- What values do you hold that align with Desmond Tutu’s call to do good in the world?



### **Community and Society:**

- How can we encourage others to join us in doing “little bits of good” to create a more inclusive society?
- In what ways can communities come together and show support for each other?
- How can we ensure that our good actions inspire others to do the same and create a ripple effect in society?

### **Global Perspective:**

- How do you think the cumulative effect of many people doing “little bits of good” could help address global issues like racism?
- How can learning about different cultures and histories help people be kind to each other?
- How do you think young people can lead the way in creating a world that is kinder and free from racism and discrimination?
- What kind of world do you envision for the future, and what small actions can you take today to help make that world a reality?

## **Collective Worship – Our approach**

### **Invitational**

Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

### **Inclusive**

Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we make it clear that this is ‘what Christians believe’, saying things like: ‘I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?’ ‘The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that ... Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

### **Inspiring**

We aim for our acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?