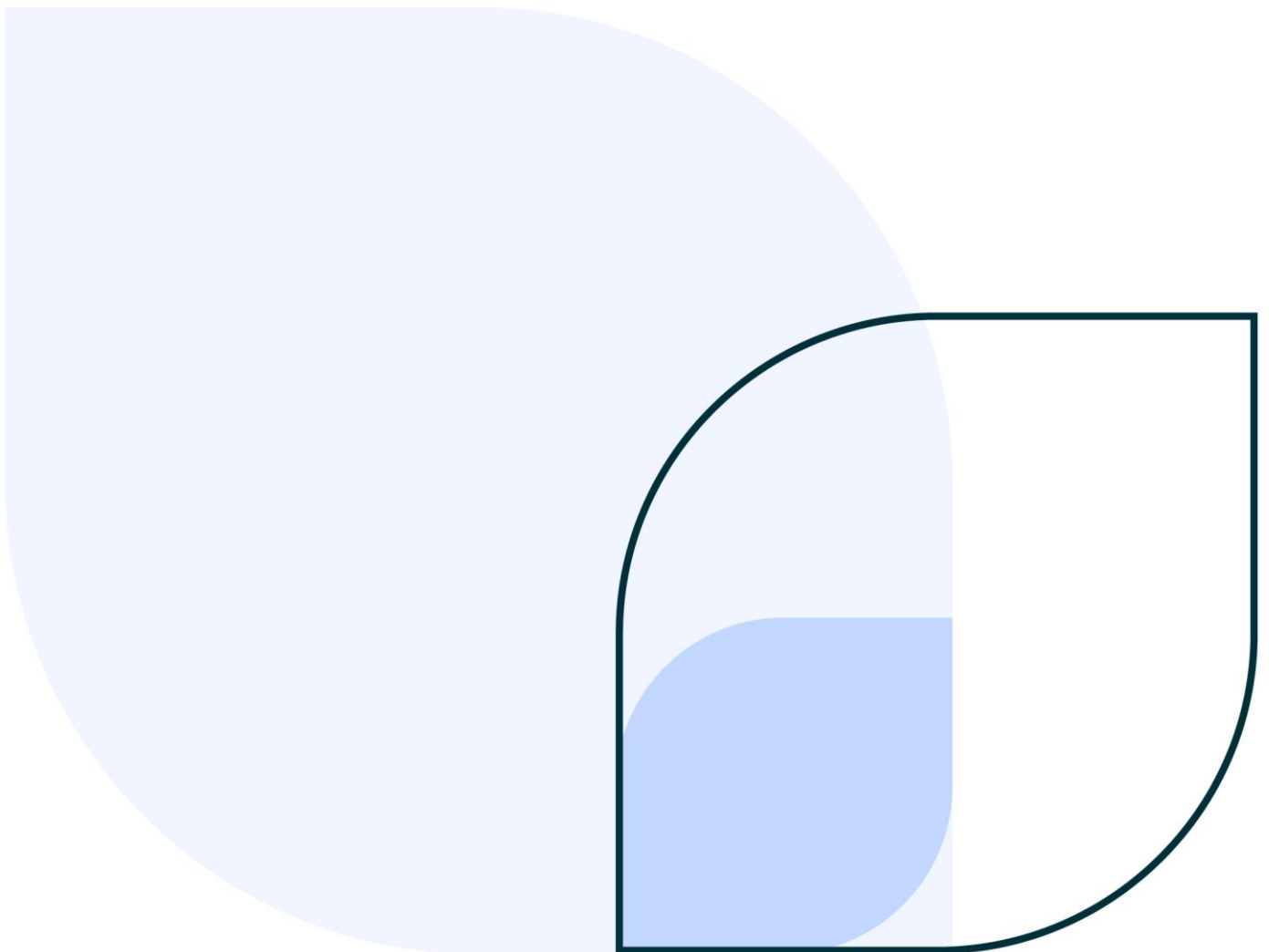


Collective Worship

Secondary resources:

Where there is hurt, let us sow peace.





Key Concept / Message

Slide 1

On Monday 29th July an attack took place at a dance group in Southport, a seaside town in the North West of England. Thirteen individuals were hurt in the attack and sadly three of these were children who died.

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. Including messages from King Charles and Queen Camilla and the Prince and Princess of Wales.

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 secondary 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 love can take the form of sharing in others' grief as well as not being afraid to show our own grief. We reflect on how we can contribute to making society a more inclusive space where we can coexist peacefully, finding ways to support others during their time of need.

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 (familiarity is a helpful part of providing a safe environment in the aftermath of difficult times). As children enter worship, use a reflective piece of music (for example [Ave Verum Corpus](#) – Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart) to set the tone.

You may like to start with an opening prayer, such as this one:

Loving God,
In the aftermath of pain and unrest,
We turn to You for hope and guidance.
Help us to learn from our struggles,
And to work together to build a future of peace.

Grant us the courage to stand for justice,
And the wisdom to listen with open hearts.
Strengthen our communities with love and understanding,
That we may walk forward in unity and faith.

As we seek healing and renewal,
May Your light guide our path,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Slide 3

Share the following quotes on a slide for students to reflect on:

Martin Luther King : ‘Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can’

Mahatma Gandhi: “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Helen Keller: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Anne Frank: “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”



You might consider asking students to reflect on **one** of the following questions:

What can we learn from the words of those who have come before us?

How can we work together as a school and community to make the world a better place?

How can we work to foster about unity in times of division?

Bible Passage

Slide 4

John 11:28-36:

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.” When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. “Where have you laid him?” he asked.

“Come and see, Lord,” they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, “See how he loved him!”

Engagement

Slide 5

Jesus weeps

In times of pain and sorrow, individuals often respond in different ways. The killing of the three children in Southport saw an outward show of society grieving and beginning the process of going through the five stages of grief. Within the process, the race demonstrations appeared to resemble that of stage two: ‘anger’. It is important to remember that whilst people might feel angry when they experience grief, the use of violence is not the answer.

The concept of the five stages of grief was developed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, a Swiss-American psychiatrist. Kübler-Ross identified the stages as Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance.



Denial: At first, you might find it hard to believe that something sad or upsetting has happened. It can feel like it's not really real or that it's just a bad dream.

Anger: You might feel really mad about the situation. It's normal to be upset and to ask "Why me?" or "Why did this happen?" You might even feel angry at yourself, others, or the situation.

Bargaining: In this stage, you might start thinking about what you could have done differently to change the outcome. You might make deals with yourself or wish for things to be different.

Depression: This is when the sadness really sets in. You might feel overwhelmed, lonely, or really down. It's okay to feel this way, and it's important to let yourself feel these emotions.

Acceptance: Eventually, you start to come to terms with what happened. It doesn't mean you're okay with it, but you begin to find a way to move forward and cope with the change.

Slide 6

The Bible states in the book of James the importance of taking the time to listen to one another whilst controlling our anger. It echoes the words used in the Old Testament to describe the character of God (e.g. Psalm 103:8 'The Lord is merciful and gracious, **slow to anger** and abounding in steadfast love.').

James 1:19-20

"My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

Why is it important that even in times of pain and sorrow, we do not resort to violence?

Even in times of misery and loss, how can we work together as a community to support one another through difficult times?

How does coming together as a community support us in healing the wounds that may have been inflicted by others?

The passage in James speaks on being **slow** to speak and **slow** to become angry.

Why is being 'slow to speak and slow to become angry' so important – especially in the digital world?

When accessing information online, we can easily react strongly to the stories, images or quotes we see. It is important that we ensure what we are seeing and reading is accurate before we respond to it, repeat it or reshare the information to a wider audience. Responding slowly enables us to make wise decisions, particularly in a world of misinformation.

Response

Slide 7

Coming together in times of sadness and grief; what does a loving response look like?

Revisit the bible passage, looking at the ways in which Jesus shows his love. He **stops** to join in their visceral grief. He **doesn't rush** into the miracle which follows (raising Lazarus from the dead), even though He is capable of it. He recognizes that a slow response is needed, one that **connects** with those around Him and shows them it is absolutely okay to feel sad. It is highly empathetic and deeply compassionate. St John describes how the people



commented on Jesus' love for Lazarus when He did this – it was His humanity, not His miraculous raising of Lazarus which demonstrated this.

Reflect on the ways in which we might follow His example, showing compassion to those in grief, pain and fear.

This is a moment of inclusion, where all are brought together in this collective moment of weeping and grieving for Lazarus. How can we avoid rushing into solutions, but rather take the time to dwell with others – listening to them and joining with them so as to strengthen a community, not divide it, through our actions and our words.

How can we seek out inclusion in moments such as this – ensuring all are made to feel welcome?

How can we look for a loving response, rather than a divisive or hateful response, in such times?

Ask:

What does a loving response to grief look like?

What can we learn from Jesus' example in this passage?

Slide 8

Ask the students to think about how they can help to build more inclusive communities where individuals from all different backgrounds can come together collectively. You might like to use a format like this (at an age-appropriate level).

Encourage students to reflect on one of the following. You could get them to complete it as a written task during a lesson.

- I can contribute to a peaceful community by...
- To understand others better, especially during difficult times, I could...
- To help create a sense of belonging, I could...
- I could make a positive impact, even when things feel overwhelming, by...

Or

- I can contribute to a more peaceful environment by...
- I can encourage unity in my community by...
- To promote peace, even when facing difficult situations, I could...
- When I'm upset, I could help reduce conflicts by...

You may like to share the [video](#) of 'Make me an Instrument of Your Peace', the famous prayer of St Francis of Assisi: 'where there is hatred, let me sow love'.

Slide 9

Prayer:

Invite the students to join with you in prayer.

I invite you to join 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**'.



Loving God,

We come together in prayer, seeking your guidance in building a more just and inclusive world.

Open our hearts to see the dignity and worth of every person, and teach us to stand against prejudice and division. Help us to be peacemakers in our school, our community, and beyond.

May we reflect your love in all we do, showing kindness, understanding, and respect to all. Strengthen our commitment to creating a society where everyone is valued and can thrive.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

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. Students 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 or draw ways to help create a more inclusive school and local community and place them on a tree display. This could be displayed in tutor group rooms or on a centralised school display.

Use the EXAMEN prayer of St Ignatius to pray for a more inclusive society.

1. God of healing, thank You for the strength found in our diverse communities.
2. Illuminate my heart to see where I have welcomed or excluded others.
3. Forgive me for moments of exclusion, whether in thought or deed
4. Grant me the courage to stand up for justice and inclusion.
5. Lead me to be a light of hope and healing in a fractured society. Amen.



Tackling Misinformation

We have seen in this instance, that the spreading of misinformation caused an angry and violent reaction by members of our society, during a time of pain and suffering. We know that during difficult times, individuals may find it difficult to process information but it is vital as a community, we come together to support one another both in person and online.

How do we ensure the information we are reading and accessing is correct?

In a time of mass information on the internet, it is important that we can verify the accuracy of the information being provided.

Verifying misinformation on the internet is crucial for students as it equips them with essential critical thinking and research skills needed for academic success and informed decision-making. At these stages, students are increasingly exposed to a wide array of information online, much of which can be misleading or false. The ability to verify this information ensures that they can distinguish fact from fiction, which is vital not only for producing academic work but also for making responsible decisions in their personal lives.

As students form opinions on social, political, and health issues, the ability to critically evaluate information helps them engage with these topics thoughtfully and ethically, avoiding the pitfalls of digital manipulation. Furthermore, understanding the importance of sharing accurate information fosters a sense of responsibility as they contribute to society, both online and offline. In an age where misinformation can have serious consequences, verifying information empowers students to be informed, ethical, and active participants in their communities.

Fact-Checking Challenge:

Assign students an online article and ask them to fact-check it by using multiple credible sources. Consider providing them with news articles with differing perspectives on the same topic and ask students to identify bias and point out how it influences the narrative or ask students to cross-reference a piece of information with at least three different reputable sources to verify accuracy.

Activities that can develop practices and habits:

Daily Gratitude and Reflection Journal

Encourage students to write daily reflections on acts of inclusion 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 promote inclusivity and what they can do better next time.

Conversations which connect communities

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



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 promote inclusivity and understanding 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 to heal after incidents of racial tension or violence?
- How can we ensure that our good actions inspire others to do the same and create a ripple effect in society?
- How can we balance speaking out against injustice with showing kindness and understanding towards others?

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 reduce racial prejudice?
- How do you think young people can lead the way in creating a world that is free from racism and discrimination?
- What role does the media play in shaping our perceptions of race and how can we critically engage with the information we consume?
- How can technology and social media be used positively to spread awareness and fight against racial injustice?
- 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?