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Introduction

Assembly is a grand get-together, a time when you and the children celebrate being a community. Rightly, it commands a regular timetable slot, yet its very frequency places heavy demands on you, the teacher. Each of these meetings requires a theme. Current happenings in your school provide some material, but inevitably you find yourself looking for new ideas. So a gap opens between the number of get-togethers and your stock of material.

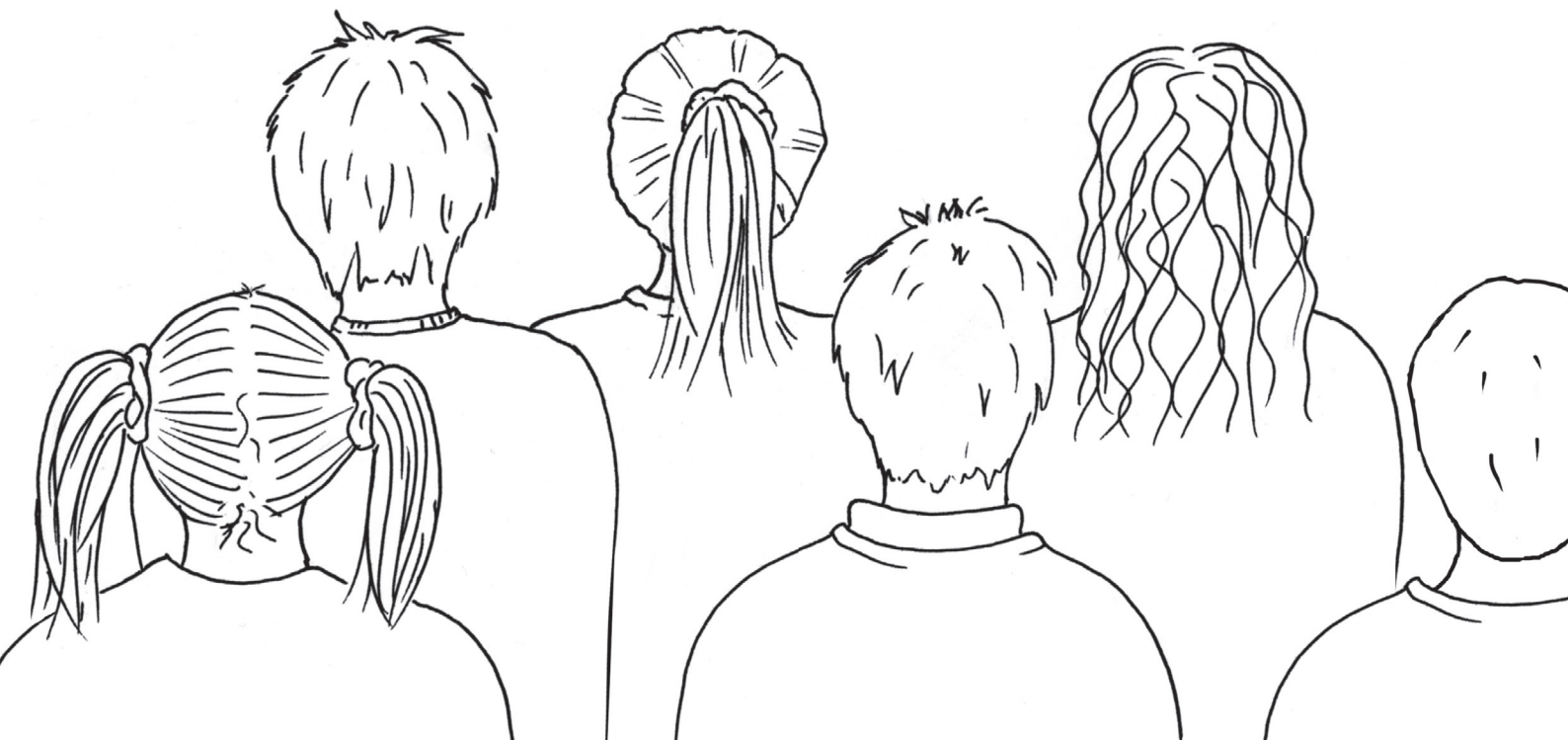
This book aims to fill that gap and provide you with fresh inspiration. Following the chronology of the year, dates are pulled from the calendar, and their significance explained. They are linked to facts that will interest children in this age group: birthdays of writers they have read; information about countries they have heard of; historical events discussed in history lessons; festivals celebrated in their town; celebrations by children in other parts of the world. The book points you in the direction of new themes and it reveals new possibilities for making your assemblies relevant to what is happening in the rest of the curriculum. As for the children, it opens their eyes to a wider world beyond school and home.

For each month, there are suggestions about how you could use the calendar links to help you create an Assembly. Each month provides at least one easy-to-follow, fully planned and resourced, ready-to use Assembly. Each Assembly plan explains what you will need, what to do beforehand, and what to say to the children. It supplies

poems, stories and accounts to read, and songs to sing. In addition, each has a practical follow-up, so that Assembly time forms an integral part of school life, with a clear link to the curriculum.

Yet factual information, follow-up ideas, and curriculum links are merely part of the picture. Assembly suggestions and plans are there to be followed, but, with confidence, you will adapt them: you will replace a song here by one there or a personal favourite; an idea that works well, such as the express train of Assembly 6, will become a favourite way of transporting the children's thoughts to a different time or place; the children's reaction to your simple disguise as Alexander Fleming in Assembly 13 will prompt you to use the same device for an Assembly of your own planning; their response to acting as living portraits in Assembly 7 will make you try a more interactive approach in another Assembly.

In short, this book will continually re-stock your inspiration store. In so doing, it will keep Assembly an exciting, enjoyable and rewarding time of the day.



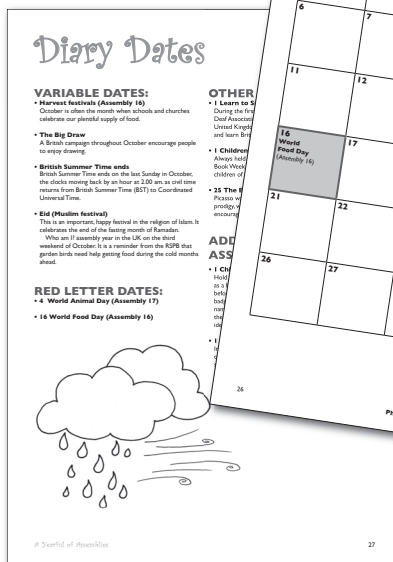
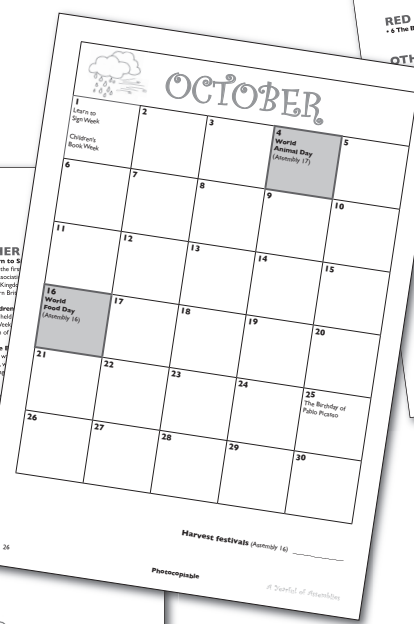
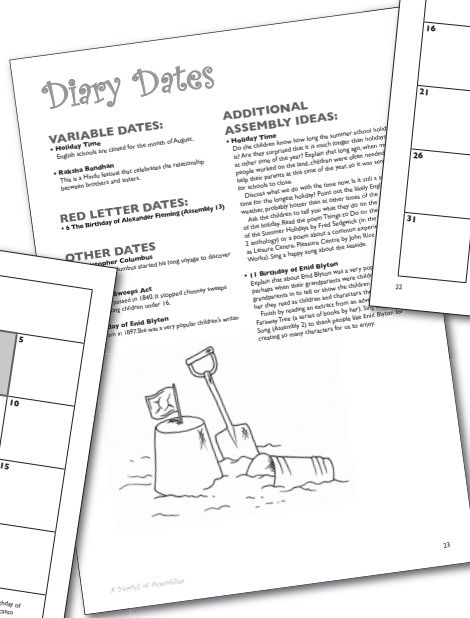
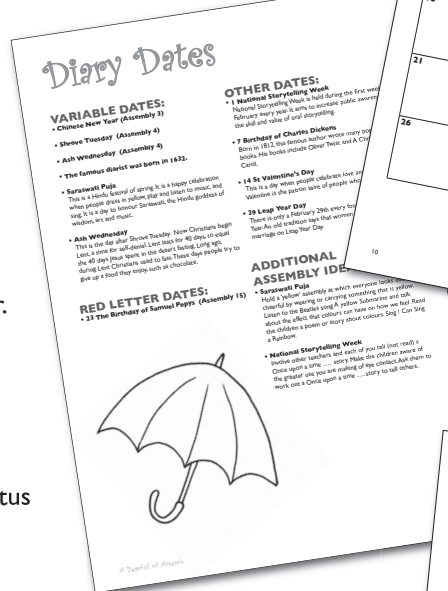
How to use the Calendar

Make the calendar page work for you. Your school has its own special occasions to remember. Enter these on the calendar.

The page is also photocopiable, allowing you to make calendar changes each year. It will mean that variable dates are always entered correctly and special annotations can be added and removed. It will mean that occasions only relevant to this year are entered for only this year. For example:

- A school red letter date: the school's tenth birthday
- A town celebration: the town is granted the status of a city
- A national event: the opening of the Olympic Games in your country

The calendar will let you see at a glance what is happening each month; what is relevant to your children; and what will inspire them and you. Enjoy using it.



JANUARY



1 New Year's Day (Assembly 1)	2	3	4	5 Twelfth Night
6 Epiphany (Assembly 20)	7	8	9	10
11	12 Birthday of Charles Perrault	13	14	15
16	17	18 Birthday of A. A. Milne (Assembly 2)	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Birthday of Lewis Carroll	28	29	30
31				

Diary Dates

VARIABLE DATES:

- **Pongal**

Pongal is a popular harvest festival of Southern India. Pongal falls in mid-January every year and marks the beginning of Uttarayan – the sun's journey northwards.

RED LETTER DATES:

- **1 New Year's Day (Assembly 1)**

- **6 Epiphany (Assembly 20)**

- **18 Birthday of A. A. Milne (Assembly 2)**

OTHER DATES:

- **5 Twelfth Night**

This is the twelfth day of the Christmas period. Traditionally, people take down their Christmas decorations now. Superstition says that it is unlucky to still have decorations up after Twelfth Night.

- **12 Birthday of Charles Perrault**

Perrault was an important writer of children's fairy tales. Born in France in 1628, his tales included Little Red Riding Hood and Cinderella.

- **27 Birthday of Lewis Carroll**

The author of the popular fantasy stories of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Alice through the Looking-Glass was born in 1832.

ADDITIONAL

ASSEMBLY IDEAS:

- **12 Birthday of Charles Perrault**

Read the children the traditional tale Cinderella. Ask them to identify the 'good' central character and the 'villain'. Ask them to show in their facial expressions and body language which they are. As that character, what sort of things would they say?

Imagine a modern version of Cinderella, in which the central characters have reversed roles, Cinderella now being the 'villain'. Ask: What sort of things does she do? What does she say? Show me her face and body language?

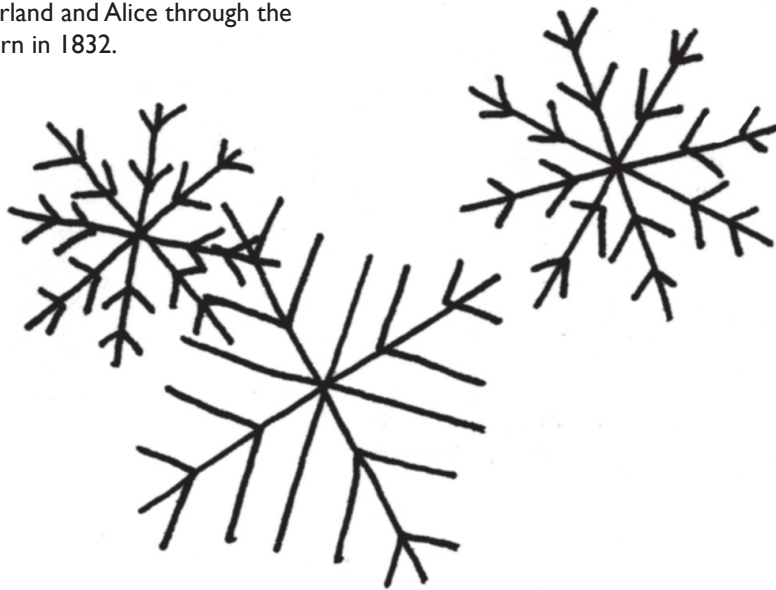
- **Pongal**

Tell the children more about the festival: celebrations last for three or four days; rice from the harvest is cooked; 'pongal' is rice cooked in milk; there are mythological tales about Krishna's strength; that the hanging of flowers and bells are hung around the necks of the cattle; the cattle are paraded through the streets.

- **27 Birthday of Lewis Carroll**

Ask the children to close their eyes and pretend to fall asleep. Let them dream about being in Wonderland. Read them part of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

When they wake up, ask them to describe their adventures.



Making choices

Assembly 1

Calendar link:

January 1, New Year's Day; December 31, New Year's Eve

Message: Choose carefully what you do

Curriculum links: D&T

Resources:

Text: Bah! by Eileen Jones

Music: Here we go round a brand new year (as Assembly 14)

Preparation: Make a separate card for each letter of Happy New Year; make a calendar date sign for December 31; have a teaching clock with movable hands and happy, party music.

What to do

- With lively music playing in the background, hang up the date, December 31, and some balloons. Switch off the music to excitedly tell the children a party is going on. Ask:
 - Can you guess what sort of party? (Point to the date.)
 - Do you want to come?
- Choose twelve children to sit at the front facing everyone else. Arrange these children side by side, but in separate groups: from left to right, five children, three children, and four children. Place the appropriate letter, face down in front of each child.
- Put a clock face in a prominent position, both hands close to 12. Gasp as you notice the time! Almost midnight! Time for a countdown!
- Together count back from 10. As the countdown ends, and the clock hands show twelve, signal to the twelve children to stand and hold up their letters.
- Encourage everyone to cheer.
- Ask: What does the message say?
 - Why did we cheer?
- Explain that most countries celebrate 'throwing out' the old year, and, on the stroke of midnight, welcoming in the new. The change to a new year is seen as a good time to make changes in ourselves and the things we choose to do. Explain that you think resolutions are a good idea, but there was a boy (read the story)...

Bah!

"Well," said Ben's mother, "I hope you have your resolutions ready. Tomorrow's New Year's Day."

"Bah!" replied Ben. "Resolutions are silly!"

"What about a resolution to make good choices?" said Mum.

"Bah! My choice is to make no resolution!" said Ben, slipping his hand slyly into the box of chocolates left over from Christmas. Mum went off to cook lunch while Ben watched a video.

"The sun's shining," she called later. "It'd be fun to play out in the snow before it melts."

"Bah! I'd rather watch this," answered Ben, sliding a new video into the machine and opening a bag of crisps hidden in his toy box.

"What about a game with your little sister?" pleaded Mum, when she popped in later.

"Bah! She's a nuisance!" said Ben, sucking a sweet from a big bag in his pocket.

"How about some exercise before lunch?" asked Mum at 12 o'clock.

"Bah! Too busy," mumbled Ben, gobbling chocolate coins from the Christmas tree.

"Food's out! Your favourite fish and chips! And strawberries afterwards!" shouted Mum, as she put lunch on the table.

"Bah! I'm too full," moaned Ben, his mouth covered with sticky Turkish delight from the New Year's Eve party dish.

"I wonder why," said Mum, puzzled. "You always love strawberries."

"Bah, it's not fair!" said Ben.

- Discuss Ben's morning. Ask:
 - Did Ben keep making bad choices about his food?
 - What would be a good New Year Resolution for him?
- Admit that you are a little bit like Ben! Your New Year resolution is a secret, but it has something to do with two pieces of paper you found in your pocket. Hold up the empty wrappers from two bars of chocolate!

Thought for the day

I will try to make wise choices this year, particularly trying to eat healthily. I want to keep fit and well. Choosing to eat more fruit and vegetables will help.

Music

Here we go round a brand new year (as Assembly 14)
(To the tune of 'Here we go round the mulberry bush'):

Verses 1 and 4 *Here we go round a brand new year,
Brand new year, brand new year.
Here we go round a brand new year,
All on an Winter morning.*

Verse 2 *Here we arrive back at school,
Back at school, back at school.
Here we arrive back at school,
With plans to do our best.*

Verse 3 *Now we can make a fresh new start
Fresh new start, fresh new start
Now we can make a fresh new start
As we try to do our best.*

Follow-up

Give the children a range of fruit and vegetables to handle and smell. Show the inside of two contrasting ones. Which would the children choose? How would they eat it?

Thinking of others

Assembly 2

Calendar link:

January 18, the birthday of A.A. Milne (1882)

Message: Thinking of others

Curriculum links: Literacy

Resources:

Text: Winnie the Pooh by A.A. Milne

Music: The Birthday Song

Preparation: Collect or draw some soft toys: a teddy bear, a donkey, a pig, two kangaroos (one smaller than the other). Write name cards for them: Winnie the-Pooh, Eeyore, Piglet, Kanga, Roo. Label a box TOYS.

What to do

- Bring a large box labelled TOYS into assembly.
- Explain that it contains toys belonging to a boy called Christopher Robin.
- Take out the toys (except the teddy bear), and agree with the children what the animals are.
- Group the toys together, leaving an empty space. Prop their name cards in front of them.
- Ask the children about the animals:
 - What do their name labels say?
 - Have you heard these names before?
 - When? Where?
- Point out the empty space. Can the children guess which animal friend goes there? (Many children will know.)
- Introduce Winnie the Pooh and place him among his friends.
- What do the children know about the characters? Discuss how Eeyore often gets sad; Winnie the Pooh is very kind, but only has a little brain so is quite forgetful. One special thing about him is that he loves eating...? (Do the children know what?) Honey!
- Explain that today is a special day: Eeyore's birthday. Unfortunately, this morning his friends forgot his birthday, so Eeyore is sadder than ever. When Pooh Bear realises, he is horrified! (Read the extract from Winnie-the-Pooh).
- Afterwards discuss Winnie the Pooh's actions. Ask:
 - Do you think Winnie the Pooh was being kind?
 - Did he choose a generous present?
 - Why was it generous? (He loves eating honey himself.)
 - What present would you give?

- Show the children A.A. Milne's book, Winnie the Pooh. Ask:
 - What can you learn from the cover?
 - Where is the author's name?
- Use the Internet to show the children a picture of the author.
- Tell the children that January 18 is Milne's birthday. Milne wrote exciting books about these characters, who were really Christopher Robin's toys. Christopher Robin's was his son.
- Do the children think Milne was thinking about himself or thinking of others when he wrote stories about these characters? Suggest thinking about someone else, as Milne did, is the best way to give a special present.

Thought for the day

Today I will try to think of others and what will make them happy. I can notice if anyone seems a little sad or worried. Perhaps I can help just by being kind, talking to them, or inviting them to join my game.

Music

The Birthday Song (To the tune of Sing a song of sixpence.)

- Cheer Eeyore up with this song. Sing it a second time, inviting children who have a birthday today to stand with Eeyore and his friends.

Verse 1 *Sing a song of birthdays,
Whose is it today?
Sing a song of birthdays,
Time for fun and play!*

Verse 2 *Presents in a pile,
Balloons in the air.
Very special presents
Just to show we care!*

Verse 3 *Candles on the cake,
Ready, steady, go!
Time to light them up.
Out in just one blow!*

Verse 4 *Sing a song of birthdays,
Hear what we have to say.
Very happy birthday,
If it's yours today!*

Follow-up

Ask the children to think about a special person in their lives. What special birthday card or present can they design?