

Hope for the Future

Aims

To reflect upon our past and present experiences as we move into our futures.

Preparation and materials

You will need four readers.

Assembly

Explain that in today's assembly, we are going to think about experiences in the past and our hopes for the future. We are going to start a long way back before the world began.

Reader 1: Genesis 1.1-2 says, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.'

Reader 2: Genesis 1.26-27 says, 'Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'

Reader 3: Genesis 2.15 says, 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.'

Explain that Christians believe that God created the world and gave human beings the enormous and hugely privileged responsibility of sharing the work of creation – of taking care of the world.

People would make mistakes along the way, as they still do today, but, despite so much evil sometimes being seen, there are still many wonderful things to give thanks for and to enjoy. God overcomes evil again and again. As one holocaust survivor wrote, 'Hope emerges from even the darkest of places.'

Show a picture of a baby. Point out that all of the students have grown from being that small. Explain that, although we have all been babies and will share many common life experiences, we have also had different experiences in our lives so far.

Ask children what have they enjoyed during the past year of school? Take answers. What are they looking forward to?

Remind the students that the things we have done, taken part in or experienced stay with us for the rest of our lives. These will include things that we have got right and things that we have got wrong, things that we don't understand and wish had not happened and things that fill us with happiness. All of these experiences help us to grow into the people we become. We all have much to be proud of in the way we have developed and in the way we have helped others to develop their lives. Nothing that we do affects just us alone.

Reader 3: Sometimes, I worry about the future.

Reader 4: Sometimes, I worry, but sometimes, I am excited about all the opportunities we will have.

Reader 3: The future is unknown. We all have hopes and fears about it.

Reader 4: But I suppose if we look at how we have arrived at where we are now, we can have confidence. Each step leads on from the last and leads forwards.

Time for reflection

Explain that Christians believe that God is with us wherever we go and in whatever situation we face. We can go forward in confidence, knowing that since the start of the world, good has overcome evil and there is hope for the future.

Prayer

Dear God,

Sometimes, we feel frightened about the future.

Help us to realize that good has always overcome evil.

Help us to remember that you are always there with us.

Help us to live in hope.

Amen.