

How to get the best out of Picture News collective worship

By Anthony David

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This supporting series of collective worship resources work alongside the focus news article in our weekly Picture News. The core aim is to take the principle of the news story, align it to biblical text or themes and then offer an application. The resource is set out with the following design in mind:

1. Picture news stimulus
2. Pupil engagement activity
3. Reflection and biblical link
4. Invitational prayer
5. Class discussion
6. Worship song

This is supported by the core theme box, which always includes:

- Bible link
- Key idea
- Biblical core concept

The bible link will reflect the current news story. If you are converting this to a slideshow then it is useful to print copy the whole bible section. When reading the bible reference to the children, it is good practice to read from a bible (they can read along with you from the slide). Reading from the bible shows where in the book you are reading from and with younger children it is worth explaining where in the bible you are reading. This is also a good opportunity to involve pupils to read the extract instead of you. Changing who leads will retain attention.

The key idea is the focus. It is worth coming back to the key idea several times as this is the 'sticky' message of the collective worship. There will only ever be one key idea as children (and adults) are far more likely to remember one idea than two or three which can then be referenced during the day. Where possible, you can align your school vision to the key idea as that will make the link more relevant to your pupils in their school.

Highlighting the biblical core concept will help children to understand the flow of the bible as a whole. These eight themes cover the meta-narrative (big bible story) from before Creation in Genesis to the Kingdom of God as set out in Revelations. A useful tip is to have these images to hand in your class in A4 or in your hall enlarged to A3.

Setting up collective worship

You will have your own ways of setting the atmosphere for collective worship. Useful resources include:

- Age appropriate bible
- Candle
- Cross
- Globe

By its nature, news is global, and this is reflected in Picture News weekly. This is a great opportunity to highlight Christianity as a global religion and that Christians in the UK can support and pray for Christians all around the world.

A key focus of collective worship is to identify a theme (in the example below it is 'running to learn'). Using your school vision and values will help children contextualise the news story and reinforce the key idea. It will also help in maintaining collective worship as an anchor in the day. For this reason, the weekly notes end with a class discussion point. Consider when would be a good time to do this (maybe a few minutes before lunch or near the end of the school day) as it will help maintain the collective worship message throughout the day, giving it more impact. A useful point is to email the class discussion point to colleagues before the collective worship so that they are prepared. Also, agree a time in the day when this can be covered in class.

Starting your collective worship with the pupil involvement activity will bring it alive. This is a great moment for children to interact and share ideas, particularly in the pupil talk section. It is a fine balance between setting an example to involve pupils and reinforce the core theme and being an entertainer. You will know your children and how far you can take them but this is the fun part of the session and is important to draw children in.

Talking time is equally important. When children are discussing questions encourage staff to join in the conversation with children (or with each other) as this is a time to both hear children who you may otherwise not spend time with and model that this is shared spiritual experience, some of which includes our opinions or experiences. Sadly, time for talk is always limited so be clear what the purpose of this is and that it is -

- a) Ok to just listen
- b) Ok to be the talker
- c) Ok to overhear other conversations and be directed by other children's comments

When the talk is finished, you can either share some comments that you have overheard, ask staff to share their conversations with pupils or ask pupils. Children love to share their thoughts and it is important to allow time to be heard.

The think section is where the Picture News story, pupil activity and the bible meet for the first time. This is important to get right. It is where the people you are talking to (children and adults) can draw together the story and see its relevance in the bible. There may be questions in this section but be clear that these may be questions to think about. Allow time to pose a question and then allow time to just think about it. These quiet periods are just as important as the busier sections of the collective worship.

This will lead to an invitational prayer. Prayer is an invitation to be with God. If staff or children are not Christians, or have no religion they may find this awkward if there is no sense of invitation. It is useful to invite everyone to pray whilst explaining how to join in. It is alright to:

- Put hands together to pray (the traditional approach)
- To only close eyes
- To look at the ground
- To watch the leader
- To focus on the candle

What is important is that children/staff take time to pause. You may decide to invite pupils to lead this section. There is always a written prayer that may only take a few minutes to pre-read before leading the school or class in prayer. It is also a simple way of involving either other adults or pupils in your collective worship.

As they become more experienced, you could leave some time at the end for children to offer their own impromptu prayers. If you do decide to do this it is useful to prime some children before who you know will be confident or experienced enough to pray spontaneously (though it may be less spontaneous first time round). Over time, this will encourage children to pray prayers that reflect the theme of the collective worship. A safe environment to encourage impromptu prayer is in the classroom and if you are leading this as a class based collective worship, you may want to explore this at this time.

Each collective worship will include a suggested song. These songs are designed to complement the focus but you may well have your own songs that are well loved that you would prefer.

School Vision

Your vision and values are what shape your school. It is therefore natural that you should try to tie these to your collective worship. Doing this will reinforce your vision and bring a school focused relevance to the picture news article that is being discussed at the time. Some stories may feel quite distant to children if they do not have a hook that can bring that relevance to them. Your school and its vision can act as that grounding device and help children understand complex global issues appropriately.

Pupil led worship

Involving pupils is key to children growing spiritually. The more involved they are the more invested in the process they will become. The basic worship model allows children to be involved, however this can be developed to children leading. Mentioned earlier is how children could engage with prayer. Whilst they are building confidence, they could read the written prayer but as they develop they can lead other aspects of the worship alongside an adult. The safest place to do this is in a class assembly or alternatively older children could lead younger phase collective worship. It should remain that adults lead the majority of collective worships in school but this is an opportunity for children to grow spirituality and flourish within the context of a safe resource.

Involving other adults

A church service will typically be punctuated with different adults leading sections of the service. This model can be adopted by schools and as much as it is good to include different children with bible readings or leading prayers, you can involve other adults. Don't be surprised if they are more shy than the pupils! They may well need as much support and time to pre-read as anybody else which is important to bear in mind.

Involving adults in engagement activity can have great outcomes, often very funny (even if you have a competitive member of staff!) As with any strategy, do not overuse but when considered carefully it can reinforce the key idea whilst providing a lovely opportunity to see other members of staff in a new light.

A final point: Courageous Advocacy

A defined aspect in the current SIAMs framework is courageous advocacy. Essentially courageous advocacy encourages a school community to develop a greater awareness of the challenges others face in life and how they, as individuals, can make a difference in their school community, local community and further afield. However, the challenge can be highlighting what these opportunities are. In this way, Picture News is able to raise awareness of an issues that children can engage with. It may be understanding aspects of law, raising awareness of a campaign, deepening relationships with other groups; all of these go towards building a culture that is questioning and has the potential to be courageous. Each picture news is supported by an article from the Convention of the Rights of a Child (which is upheld by UNICEF) which you may also want to reference in class or as part of your collective worship.



Picture News

Bible Link: Ephesians 4:11

Key idea: Running to learn!

Biblical core concept: Salvation



Pupil involvement: A collection of hats from different jobs (you could ask a Reception teacher or search 'community workers + printable hats' for printable examples): ask a few children to be 'our workers' who are prepared to be interviewed about why they decided on their job.

Pupil talk: Discuss with partners who they would like to interview and what question they would like to ask. Consider 'why did you want to become...?', 'what has been the hardest thing you have had to do...?', 'do you like your job...?'

Think: It's hard to know what you want to do when you are older. These men at the Denmark/Finland football match probably didn't know they wanted to be first aid helpers when they were young, but here we can see that they are running to action. The Bible teaches us that it is good to work and regularly talks about team work and being ready to learn. Ephesians 4:11 says "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." This describes different jobs in the Bible, which we can understand as different jobs in our world. Many cultures and people of the world have great thinkers, speakers and teachers. Equally, each team has great players, some destined for greatness and some that will be leaders taking their team to high places. Teamwork relies on everyone knowing the position and fulfilling it. It's about being ready to fulfil your role: are you running to learn?

Invitational Prayer: Dear Lord, we thank you that these men were ready to help during Denmark's game. We thank you that they were trained and running to help. We ask that you guide our lives so that, if the time comes, we are able to run to help. Help us to be learners who are running to learn!

Class discussion: What jobs can you think of – consider anything from computer technicians, doctors, astronauts, cleaners, baristas or even Bishops! Encourage the children to really get 'creative' with their ideas. Then ask them to choose one and think about what you might need to learn in class to be successful (speak, read, count...)



God Creation Fall People of God Incarnation Gospel **Salvation** Kingdom of God