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Introduction

This book offers 20 different assemblies that can be used throughout the school year. Many of the assemblies include Collective Worship, which will enable your school to meet the relevant legal requirements. Others are assemblies that will make a valuable contribution to the life of your school. While assemblies are not required by law, schools do legally have to provide a daily act of worship for all pupils.

The assemblies in this book focus on different festivals throughout the year and a mix of different religions are covered. The assemblies are ordered as the festivals happen throughout the school year. Some of the assemblies are aimed at children in KS1 and some at children in KS2. They are designed for use with a whole key stage or individual classes. The assemblies involve a variety of approaches, including presentation, discussion, storytelling, and some offer the opportunity for child involvement.

What will I find in each assembly?

There is a helpful grid at the top of each assembly page showing the religion, time of year of the festival, age range, audience and assembly type. The format for each assembly is the same, with clear objectives, necessary resources listed, background information, an introduction and main assembly ideas. In addition, each concludes with a closing prayer or thought. Some assemblies are also accompanied by supplementary resource materials in the form of photocopiable sheets to be used during the assembly. These resources are also available to download at www.scholastic.co.uk/20-best-assemblies. Where this is possible you will see this icon within the assembly notes:



Tips for smooth assemblies

- Ideally you should read through the background information and if there is time rehearse assemblies in advance.
- Make sure that any resources required are prepared ahead of time.
- Make sure that everyone will be able to hear you, and see both you and any resources you have.
- Try to involve children wherever possible but remember to allow time for this.
- Make sure that children are briefed if they are required to perform in any way.
- Try to create an appropriate atmosphere, for example by using music.

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Guru Nanak's birthday

Objectives

- To show that some people are so famous that their lives and their birthdays are celebrated.
- To show that strong leaders should influence other people for good rather than bad.

Resources

- the photocopiable sheet 'The story of Guru Nanak' on page 10 
- a map of the world

Religion	Time of year	Age range
Sikh	November	KS1
Led by	Audience	Type
teacher	class or whole key stage	discussion and storytelling

Background

Guru Nanak was the founder and leader of the Sikh religion and his birthday is in November. It is celebrated with processions through the streets and fireworks, and in the *gurdwara*, the Sikh temple, the holy book is read from beginning to end. In India, Sikh children are given new clothes and a day off school. Candles are lit in people's homes and places of work. Be aware that Sikh children in your class or school may know more than you do about Guru Nanak.

Introduction

- Ask the children to think about what being a leader means and to name some leaders that they know. As well as the prime minister and captains of sports teams, include religious leaders.
- Talk to the children about what it means to be a good leader - perhaps linking this to what it means to be a good friend - such as being helpful, trustworthy, reliable and caring. A leader is also someone who can make a difference. Football-team captains are leaders and part of their role is to tell the team to do things in certain ways and to try harder.

Main assembly

- Tell the children that Guru Nanak was a leader and a teacher from India.
- Show the children where India is on the map. Tell them that the people who follow Guru Nanak are called Sikhs. Guru Nanak taught people about God and there are lots of good stories about him.
- Read 'The story of Guru Nanak' photocopiable sheet on page 10. Emphasise Guru Nanak's message: that God is not interested in the differences between us and that everyone is equal. Ask the children to think about how we are all different. For example, we wear different clothes, support different football teams or prefer different music. Guru Nanak said that differences do not matter: we may be big or strong, small or weak but we are all equal in the eyes of God.

Closing thought or prayer

Ask the children to close their eyes and think about some of their friends: *Do our friends look like us? Do they live in the same kinds of houses? Do they wear the same coloured clothes? Do they like the same food?* They probably do not, but we still like them because they are our friends. Ask the children to say the following with you:

There are big people and small people,
Black people and white people,
Strong and weak, old and young,
And some are rich and some are poor,
But we are all equal.

The story of Guru Nanak

Retold by Roger Smith

Nanak wasn't a child who rushed about telling people what to do and organising them. In fact, he was a bit of a daydreamer. He loved to sit in the sun by the banks of the river that was near his home and write poems and stories.

As he grew up he started to help people more and more, which sometimes made his father angry. Once, when his father gave him some money to start a business, he didn't use the money to buy things and sell them to make more money; instead, he bought food for some hungry people he met on the roadside. His father was furious but Nanak just said that he thought it was more important to feed people who haven't got enough to eat.

One hot and dusty day, Nanak was down by the river and he decided to go swimming. He took his clothes off and left them on the bank, in the grass. He dived in and lay in the water, enjoying how cool it was compared to the sun that was beating down from a clear, blue sky. Eventually, he decided to move and he swam under water; but he didn't come up again. The sun still shone, the ground was still dusty, his clothes were still on the bank, but he had disappeared. The water stayed still and smooth and no one could see him or knew where he

had gone. They were all very worried, especially his friends and his family. They all thought that they would never see him again. They began to be very, very sad because they remembered him as a kind, happy, helpful person. After three days, when people had searched the banks and the woods near to the river, they had given up all hope of seeing him again.

But suddenly, there he was. Of course everyone was really pleased to see him but they realised that he had changed. He had always been a happy cheerful person but now his eyes were bright and shining and he just seemed to be full of extra joy and more and more happiness. He told them that when he was in the river he had had a vision from God and that God had given him a message that he had to tell to everyone. The message was that God had made everything and that he saw everyone as equals and wanted everyone to live peacefully together with each other. When his friends and family had listened to him, they started calling him 'Guru', which means teacher. From then on, he gave away everything that he owned to poor people and travelled far and wide to tell people the message that God had given him.

