



We'll meet again

A selection of assembly ideas and class-based activities from Place2Be to support your school community as it comes back together.

Following a challenging time, we've put together a series of resources focusing on community recovery and helping you to bring your school back together.

We've split these resources into four themes (self-efficacy, hope, gratitude and connectedness), with each drawing upon some of the factors that underpin wellbeing and positive psychology.

These assembly and class/group ideas are intended as a universal resource for all children, and staff are invited to use them as starting points to promote emotional wellbeing, resilience and recovery.

If you'd like to adapt or extend the content found within this booklet, we've also created a version of these resources for secondary schools which you can also refer to.

Please remember to follow current government guidance around social distancing when using these ideas.

We hope you find this booklet helpful as you work towards community recovery.

From us all at Place2Be



4 themes to support community recovery:



1.
Self-efficacy
p3-4

2.
Hope
p5-6

3.
Gratitude
p7-8

4.
Connectedness
p9-10

Key



Assembly ideas



Classroom ideas and activities

Theme 1:

Promoting Self-efficacy

While it is natural to have feelings of helplessness and uncertainty, especially during the current crisis, it is important for children to feel that what they say and do matters and that their actions can make a difference. Self-efficacy is the belief that we can make a difference and have strengths we can draw on in times of challenge. It's also a core belief underpinning motivation, and emotional wellbeing.

Assembly ideas



Materials required:

[The Hare and the Tortoise](#) (or similar story of your own)

Step one

Discuss why it is important to believe in ourselves and others. Introduce the phrase self-belief. Explain what this is and why it is important. Display definitions and discuss.

Note – This is not just about feeling good about yourself but also having the inner confidence to believe that there are things we can do to make a difference.

Having self-belief and knowing we have strengths to draw on in times of challenge can help situations feel less stressful, and more manageable. This is an important factor for our mental wellbeing.

Step two

Share the story or chose one of your own.

Teaching point to consider

Sometimes the challenge may feel really difficult, but the important thing is to use our skills to the best of our ability and keep trying.

Step three

Questions to explore:

- Why did the tortoise succeed - is he really faster than the hare?
- What did the tortoise do to make the most of his strengths?
- Can you think of a time when you faced something tricky and weren't sure how it would turn out, but you gave it a go and did the very best you could?
- Invite teachers/adults to give some examples.
- In the story there were some things the tortoise could control and some things he couldn't. Discuss. He couldn't control how the hare behaved and what he said, or the

fact that the hare has a natural strength for running fast, but the tortoise could control how he behaved towards the hare, and how he planned and practiced for the race, and tried to do his best.

Extension

Sometimes things happen that are out of our control, and this can make us feel big emotions like helplessness, fear and anxiety. Recently we had no control over some things such as;

- The instructions from the government e.g. to close schools, to physical distance, to work from home.
- How the virus spread.
- How other people behaved.

At such times it is important to remember the things that we can control, and the strengths and the skills we can draw on to make a difference. During the past few weeks we have

seen people make a difference by:

- Volunteering and helping others e.g. staying in touch with vulnerable people.
- Using their skills to do different things such as making equipment, delivering food etc.
- Thinking about their own behaviour and doing things to make the most of their skills and learn new ones e.g. baking new dishes, reading different books, practicing a new exercise routine.

Step four

On a paper chain write or draw one of your strengths... give some examples. This could be a skill or strength you have practiced recently, or a new one you have discovered. Collect the links and join to make a whole school 'We Can' paper chain.



Theme 1:

Promoting Self-efficacy

Classroom ideas and activities



These are ideas to use with a whole class or group – differentiate according to year group, age and ability/interest.

I can...

Invite each child to draw or write about an ability or strength (note this is not necessarily about being the best at something but about enjoyment, using their skills and persevering)

Make a 'we can' classroom collage of all the 'I can' statements

Or

Link the 'I can' statements into a paper chain to display around school.

You can...

Put the names of each child on a card in a box. In a safe space, encourage children to take a name from the box and write down something that they admire about that child.

Explain to children that we are looking for strengths and qualities and give some examples e.g. always does their best, never gives up, is a good friend etc. Pass the cards around so that all children have a turn to write on everyone's card (being carefully to avoid children being given their own name card). Return the cards to the box. Give each child their own name card to keep privately for them to look at and remember their unique strengths.

Set some goals

Encourage children to set some new goals which can use some of their skills and strengths, as well as developing new ones.

Encourage children to:

- Think of a goal
- Who can help them achieve it
- What they will do to stick to their goal

Encourage children to work together to set their goal. Encourage them to recognise their own and others' unique strengths and to think of ways to encourage each other when the going gets tough.

How to...

Encourage children to write a cartoon strip 'how to' guide for something they can do, but which others might find difficult. E.g. How to ride a bike, make a cake, speak in assembly, ask someone to play etc. Display the comic strip guides in a classroom comic book.



Theme 2:

Promoting Hope

Research indicates that hope significantly and positively correlates with psychological well-being and coping in the face of adversity. Higher hope is related to better overall adjustment, while hope has also been described as “a personal rainbow of the mind”, with the rainbow being used as a symbol of hope in many households during the coronavirus pandemic.

Assembly ideas



Resources needed:

1. A short, child-friendly version of Noah's Ark or a similar story about adversity and the importance of hope.
2. Music that helps instill a sense of hope e.g.
Everything's Gonna Be Alright – Bob Marley
Bring Me Sunshine – Willie Nelson
Don't Worry, Be Happy – Bobby McFerrin

Step one

Discuss why it is important to have hope when we are faced with challenges. Display definitions or quotations about hope and discuss – which do the pupils like and why?

Step two

Share part of the story of Noah's Ark you feel is most appropriate.

Teaching points to consider

Sometimes the challenges we face feel really difficult, but the important thing is stay hopeful as best we can and to talk to a friend or trusted adult if we feel we are losing hope. Sometimes talking to people who are still feeling hopeful can help us feel hopeful – or we can talk about remaining hopeful to a friend who seems down. Remind the children that it's important to tell their teacher or another trusted adult if they are worried about how they or someone they know is feeling.

Being hopeful is not about denying the challenges. It's about knowing that you feel challenged and despite the challenge, trying to remain hopeful. Sometimes it can be helpful to remember that feelings come and go - 'this too shall pass'.

Step three

Explore relevant questions around the story e.g. for Noah's Ark they may include:

- How do you think Noah, his wife and family felt feeling trapped inside the Ark for over 40 days?
- How do you think they kept busy?
- How do you think they stayed hopeful?
- Have you got any advice for if they couldn't go out for another 40 days?

- Discuss the meaning of the rainbow at the end of the story.
- Can you think of a time when you faced something tricky and weren't sure how it would turn out, but you managed to stay hopeful?

Invite teachers /adults or older children that have been primed to give some examples.

Step four

Play one of the above pieces of music, and if appropriate, allow the children to clap, click their fingers, whistle, sing along or dance before or as they leave the assembly. Being physically active can help lift low mood and help us to feel more hopeful.

Theme 2:

Promoting Hope

Classroom ideas and activities



These are ideas to use with a whole class or group – differentiate according to year group, age and ability/interest.

Dream catchers

Make an individual, small group or class dream catcher. Students can put their hopes and dreams into words or draw a small picture or

make a small charm that captures their hopes, and attach it to the dream catcher.

Images

Find or create images of hope and make a group or class collage, in the shape of the word HOPE, for example, images of sunrises, birds flying, flowers blooming etc.

Songs

Research songs about hope and sing or dance to them together. Some examples might include:

Moving on Up
– Primal Scream

Don't Stop Believin'
– Journey

Things can only get better – D:Ream



Theme 3:

Promoting Gratitude

Understandably our thoughts and feelings may be focused on the challenges of recent events and it's not always easy to find things to be grateful for. However, studies suggest that finding things to be thankful for is important for our wellbeing, leading to physical and psychological benefits, as well as being a 'social glue' that connects people.

Assembly ideas



Why gratitude matters

Materials required

[Story – The Giving Tree](#), Shel Silverstein (or choose one of your own)

Step one

What is gratitude?

Discuss and share definitions of gratitude.

Ask for examples of how we show our thanks.

Introduce the idea that we can show gratitude in different ways, and for different things.

How do we feel when we give thanks?

How does it feel to be someone who receives thanks?

Discuss and name emotions.

Highlight the material and non-material things we might be grateful for and not always notice.

Many children may have been involved in the Thursday evening clapping for key workers, which is a good example of how giving thanks brought people together.

Step two

Read or show the story [The Giving Tree](#).

Teaching point

We can show gratitude in different ways and for different things.

Step three

Questions to explore:

- Did the boy always remember to show his thanks to the tree?
- Could he have shown his appreciation in a different way? How?

- What could he be grateful to the tree for?
- Do you think the boy's appreciation changed as the story went on?
- At the end what do you think the boy was most grateful for?
- How was the tree grateful to the boy? How did he show it?
- We can be thankful in lots of different ways, for example we might be grateful that we can help someone else.

Extension activity

Share the newspaper article on the [Giving Tree in America](#), where a woman created her own 'giving tree' with facemasks for the community. Discuss the benefits of giving and receiving, and link this to wellbeing.

Step four

What are we grateful for today?

Invite comments.

It is important to think about the things we are thankful for, even in difficult times.

Write or draw something you are grateful for on a leaf.

Place the leaf on a whole school or classroom gratitude tree.

Theme 3:

Promoting Gratitude

Classroom ideas and activities



These are ideas to use with a whole class or group – differentiate according to year group, age and ability/interest.

Classroom interviews

Ask children to interview a classmate about the things they are grateful for, and the different ways they and their family show gratitude.

If possible ask children interview someone in their family about the things they are thankful for, and the ways they like to show their thanks.

Encourage children to share stories and to consider the different way we show thanks and the things we can be thankful for.

Make a display of the different way we show gratitude and frame the display with the words 'thank you' in many different languages.

Postcard

Send a postcard of thanks to someone you are grateful to in school that week. Postcards can be delivered to each class at the end of the week.

Gratitude walk

Take a gratitude walk around school/ neighbourhood. Try to observe using all of our different senses, for example; what can we hear, see, smell, and feel.

Try to think of the things we might take for granted or not typically notice or appreciate.

In the classroom write some of the things they noticed on cardboard 'petals' which can be linked together to make a flower display.

Gratitude alphabet

A circle time game to explore the range of things we can be thankful for. In a circle ask children to think of the things they are thankful for. Beginning with "A" take turns and work around the circle all the way through the alphabet to "Z." Have fun and help each other if anyone gets stuck on a letter!



Theme 4:

Promoting Connectedness

After some time away from each other, humans often have a strong desire to re-connect. Although many of your pupils may have stayed digitally connected with each other, they may have missed being part of a bigger class, year group and whole school community – as may you, as staff.

There is a large body of research on the central importance of social support and social groups in combating stress and overcoming adversity. Here are some ideas to help you and your school community to reconnect.

Assembly ideas



Resources needed:

1. A story about helping and supporting each other in times of need e.g. The Lion and The Mouse (Aesop's fables) or **Stone Soup** (many versions available of this traditional folk tale, an example for younger children).

2. Music around the theme of togetherness e.g.

Lean On Me
– Bill Withers

I'll get By with a Little Help from my Friends
– The Beatles

3. Ingredients for a simple cake (optional!):

125g/4oz butter or margarine; 125g/4oz caster sugar; 2 eggs; 125g/4oz self raising flour

Mixing bowl and wooden spoon

Step one

Share a story which illustrates the theme of togetherness and helping each other out.

Teaching points to consider

Sometimes the challenges we face feel really difficult, but we can reach out to others for support when we need it. We can also be a source of help and support for each other.

Don't forget that it's important to tell a trusted adult if you are worried about how you or someone you know is feeling.

Step two

Explore relevant questions around the story

e.g. The Lion and The Mouse

Which character would we normally think of as stronger – a lion or a mouse?

Did the mouse need the Lion more or did the Lion need the mouse more? Or did they both need each other at different times?

e.g. Stone Soup

Discuss how if each person has just one ingredient, there is no soup. But if people combine what they have in times of need, then there is a tasty soup with enough to go round for everyone.

What was the impact of coming together to make a soup that everyone can share on the whole village?

Step three

Following on from the story you chose, do an activity that emphasises the importance of reaching out to each other when faced with a challenge.

For example, ask the children to put up their hand if they are feeling hungry. Give different children the different ingredients to make a simple cake (give one child an egg, give one child some flour etc). Ask them if they would like to eat the ingredients they have been given, individually. Do they have

any ideas what they could do to turn these separate ingredients into something tasty? One by one ask the children to add their ingredients to a mixing bowl (butter first, then mix in the sugar then beat in the eggs, then the flour). Can the children guess what you have helped them to make? Tell them they can come to taste the results later, once it is cooked. (For those children who indicated they were hungry but were not chosen, remind them snacks are available at break time).

Step four

Play the music you have chosen about connectedness to see the children out of the assembly – or have a class sing a song about connectedness.



Theme 4:

Promoting Connectedness

Note:

Please remember to follow current government guidance around social distancing when using these ideas.

Classroom ideas and activities



These are ideas to use with a whole class or group – differentiate according to year group, age and ability/interest.

Ask children what they missed most about being apart and what they like most about being together again at school (if some children are overwhelmed by being together again then acknowledge that this is ok, too).

Write these down on paper gingerbread shapes and display them, with hands connected.

Sing together

Ask your pupils to research songs about connectedness and belonging e.g.

Lean on Me – Bill Withers

He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother – The Hollies

Learn the words together and sing to other classes or year groups.

Sing songs in rounds or harmonies and discuss how the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Create together

Get each member of the school community to make something individually, for example paint on a pebble or tile, stitch a pattern on a small piece of cloth, draw on a piece of paper, take a photograph, make clay figures etc. Then combine individual efforts to make a whole class, year group or whole school display.

Move together

Create a simple dance or action song that everyone can join in. Consider games such as Hokey Cokey, parachute games, or use a maypole if you have one. Team games and fun team challenges may be a nice way for your pupils to reconnect.

Plant together

Create a class or school garden where each member of the school community (or each class) plants a seedling to tend and watch grow.

Eat together

Make use of existing routines (e.g. snack time) to sit and eat together as a class or have a special class or form lunch.

Have fun together

Plan a fun 'golden time' activity to mark being back together as a group. This could be a mini talent show, for example.





**“Thank you for everything.
I feel I’ve got my child back”**

Parent during coronavirus lockdown

Place2Be is a charity working with schools to improve the emotional wellbeing of children. Get in touch with us to find out more about what we do and how we can support your school community:



Visit place2be.org.uk



Email enquiries@place2be.org.uk



Call 0207 923 5500

Place2Be is a national charity working in England, Scotland and Wales.

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