

# Assemblies for Autumn Festivals

27 ready-to-use ideas for festivals and feast days

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IDEAL FOR  
**KS1-2**



**Martin Cox**

Foreword by Jo Fageant,  
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**Includes**

- Harvest ❖
- Saints ❖
- Remembrance ❖
- Advent ❖

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# Introduction

I hope you enjoy using this book. It's packed with tried and tested ideas for collective worship and the way it has been structured will enable you to use it in a flexible way. You can, of course, dip in and try an occasional assembly that suits your needs, but there are two fuller approaches that will both work well.

## **Date order**

First of all, you might use the assemblies in the order in which they are set out. There are two assemblies in each set (except for Advent, which has five). Either of the assemblies could be presented by a teacher, or one could be expanded—possibly with the use of extra material from Part Two and the appendices—as a class assembly to be presented by the children.

## **Key themes**

Alternatively, you could choose one of the four key themes. Look at the grid on page 11 to see whether this approach appeals to you. The themes, Harvest, Saints, Remembrance and Advent, are expanded in the appendices. Time for thematic work is often limited in school unless clear links are made to Literacy objectives or set units of work—for example, in RE or Citizenship—but many teachers are making more of these links in order to cover the curriculum more efficiently. The extra materials have been gathered so that teachers called upon to put together a class assembly have further material to draw on. Feel free to be creative both with this material and with the original assemblies.



Whatever approach you choose, please take a few moments to read through the background information and decide which of the resources you might choose to use. Sometimes they are essential and at other times purely optional. Some of the assemblies are more interactive, others more visual. Different things may work better in your context and you'll know what to use. So much can now be accessed via the Internet, by using search engines such as google.com or yahoo.com, that we've chosen not to provide illustration templates, but where a particular image came to mind, I may have listed a website as a suggestion. I am very grateful to all at BRF for their endless advice and help while I was preparing the book for publication, especially Sue Doggett, the commissioning editor.

In terms of resources, I've assumed that most schools will have a copy of the BBC book *Come and Praise*. Alongside this, I've often suggested songs from the *Out of the Ark Songs for Every...* series with their super CD backing tracks. There are other useful song-]books that are worth a look, especially *Kidsource* and its adult version, *The Source*. When looking for famous hymns, any traditional hymn book will come in handy. I've referred to *Hymns Old and New* as a source. I've always tried to use a mixture of traditional and modern hymns during a term.

## **Worksheets**

Worksheets 1–8 can be downloaded free of charge from the 'Books and resources' section of the *Barnabas* website:

[www.barnabasinschools.org.uk](http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk)

# Ways to use the assemblies

## Grid of themes

HARVEST	SAINTS	REMEMBRANCE	ADVENT
Give a man a fish A fair harvest Wonderful world (also St Francis) Off to the fair (Michaelmas)	All Welcome (St Matthew) Forgive us... (St Matthew) The story of Michael and the dragon (Michaelmas) Off to the fair (Michaelmas) Living a simple life (St Francis) Wonderful world (St Francis) Carrying on the work of Jesus (St Luke) Saying 'thank you' (St Luke) All Saints Gideon, the reluctant hero Passing on the message (St Andrew) Treasure in clay pots (St Andrew) Three bags of gold (St Nicholas) God loves a generous giver (St Nicholas)	Guy Fawkes Remember the firework safety code Remembering An act of remembrance	The servant king (Christ the King, the Sunday before Advent) The kingdom of peace (Isaiah) The patriarchs The prophets John the Baptist Mary Jesus pitches his tent Three bags of gold (St Nicholas)



## Harvest

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### Assembly 1

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# Give a man a fish

The theme of this assembly is helping others to help themselves. Harvest is the final part of a process that starts with the sowing of some of the seed from the previous harvest. Everything that has been grown and safely gathered in (the ‘harvest home’, as the hymn ‘Come you thankful people’ puts it) has been cared for by the farmer, and the crops have been watered by God, the Lord of the harvest—a bit like the head gardener in charge of the seasons.

## Bible links

I am not trying to make life easier for others by making life harder for you. But it is only fair for you to share with them when you have so much, and they have so little. Later, when they have more than enough, and you are in need, they can share with you. Then everyone will have a fair share.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:13–14

## Key background information for the teacher

The apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Christians in Corinth, says that God loves people who give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7b).

## Suggestions for visual aids and resources

- ☉ A fishing net or a rod and line
- ☉ The letters H E L P, each on a separate card
- ☉ A poster or OHT with the saying, 'Give a man a fish...'

## Ideas for exploring the theme

Start by talking to the children about going fishing and get some of them to share their experiences. Introduce the saying, 'Give a man a fish and feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime.' Discuss the meaning of this saying.

Ask the children if they know of any charities that help to feed people who are hungry. They might refer to charities that feed the hungry in this country or those that specialize in famine relief. It is important to give value to those charities that attend to people's immediate needs, but also to get the children to see the value of helping people over the longer term. This aid can be given in a variety of ways: helping to educate and train people for work, making people better so that they can earn a living, teaching farming and fishing skills, bringing water to a village, and so on.

You could wordstorm and record ideas with the children around the word CHARITY (another word for love and care) or HELP.

Here is a suggestion for presenting the word HELP, using each of the four letters as a prompt. You could have them ready on four pieces of card for volunteers to hold, revealing them in order.

- ☉ **H is for Harvest:** explain what is special about harvest—a time to say thank you to God for all the good things he gives us, and a time when we remind ourselves to share some of what we have with those less fortunate.
- ☉ **E is for Everyone:** we are all part of one world, one enormous family, one 'human race'. (One World Week is celebrated by some churches at this time of year.)

- ☼ **L is for Love:** a chance to celebrate God's love for us and to show it in our generosity to others. You might focus here on the famous chorus of the harvest hymn 'We plough the fields', which picks up this theme. You could repeat it together to involve the younger children:

*All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above.  
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord, for all his love.*

- ☼ **P is for Prayer:** when we pray, it is a chance to praise and thank God for all the things we enjoy and to tell him how we feel about the needs of others. We often pray at harvest time for charities that work to make people's lives better, and we can do this now. When we pray, it can change us to make us more generous and kind. (There is a suitable prayer suggested below.)

### Suggestions for songs

- ☼ When I needed a neighbour (*Come and Praise* 65)
- ☼ We plough the fields (*Hymns Old and New* 534)
- ☼ Come, you thankful people, come (*Hymns Old and New* 10)
- ☼ Pears and apples (*Come and Praise* 135)

### Suggested prayer

*Dear God, thank you for all the good things we enjoy. Help us, this harvest time, to remember people without enough to eat. Thank you for all the charities that work so hard to help, and for all those people who work for them, both in this country and abroad. Help them to use all the money people give wisely and well, to help as many people as possible, not just when they are hungry but so that they can make a better life for themselves in the future. Amen*

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## IDEAL FOR KS1-2

This book is packed with 27 tried-and-tested assembly ideas designed to resource both popular and lesser-known festivals in the first term of the new school year. The ideas fall under four main themes—Harvest, Saints, Remembrance and Advent—with at least two assemblies to choose from within each theme.

The material is flexible in that the assemblies can be used with a 'dip in and try' approach, followed in date order, or used to explore one of the four key themes. Topics covered include Harvest, St Matthew, Michaelmas, St Francis, St Luke, All Saints, Guy Fawkes, Remembrance, Christ the King, St Andrew, St Nicholas and Advent.

Each assembly includes key background information for the teacher, Bible links, creative ideas for introducing the theme, suggestions for visual aids and ideas for exploring the theme, including storytelling, drama, music, songs and prayers. Also, each assembly is backed up by a wealth of ideas for cross-curricular extension work in the classroom.



*Martin Cox has taught at primary level for over 20 years. His expertise is in English, Music and RE and his books usually have a strong link between those subjects.*

*His first book, A Busy Time for Angels, a big book for the Literacy Hour, was a retelling of the Christmas story from Mary's viewpoint.*

*He also writes songs and carols.*

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