

Remembrance

Six assemblies to follow the theme of Remembrance for one week
The assembly on day six can be used as a stand-alone assembly.
This assembly is suitable for younger and older students by adapting the language. Its purpose is to inform young people about the importance of individual people in conflict and the role of families in Remembrance.

DAY 5: THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES IN REMEMBRANCE

In preparation:

- The Story of John Pott and his family, featured in The Royal British Legion DVD and this CD Rom
- Background reading on the Battle of Arnhem, World War Two.

Script

This week some of us are wearing poppies – do you know why we are doing that?

The Poppy is a symbol of Remembrance– it was adopted nearly 90 years ago after the end of World War One. Its purpose was to remind everyone of the terrible effects of the war and of the incredible sacrifice so many had made, fighting and supporting their country in the conflict. Millions had been killed or injured and millions more had their lives changed, through the loss of a family member or loved one, and by the overall affects of the conflict.

The Poppy was adopted as a way of raising money for those ex-Service men and their families whose lives had been damaged by the conflict. The Poppy was chosen because it was a sturdy, brightly coloured plant and one of the few flowers that grew on the battlefields of Western Europe. For many people, it was a symbol of hope amongst so much horror.

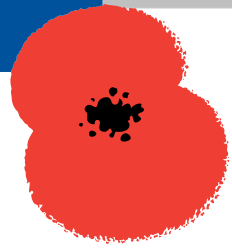
World War One ended at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month (ie 11th November) 1918, also known as Armistice Day. Representatives of The Royal British Legion worked with the Government to create a national day of Remembrance so that all those who had died or were injured should never be forgotten. Sadly, the end of World War One did not mean the end of war and World War Two began only 21 years later. After this second global conflict ended in 1945, both the Poppy and November 11th became adopted in the UK, as the official symbol and time that all conflicts, and people affected by conflict, are remembered.

The Royal British Legion still ensures that every year, Poppies are made available to anyone wanting to wear one, as a powerful symbol of Remembrance and pride in our Armed Forces and to support them and their families. The money raised by what has become known as The Royal British Legion's Poppy Appeal, still goes to support Serving and ex-Service men and women and their families. That means that, once a year on the 11 November, we all remember the people whose lives are affected by conflict. But some people also remember people and conflict at other times. They do that because of their personal connections and family experiences.

This film clip shows the son and grandson of John Pott who planned a journey of Remembrance to a place called Arnhem where John Pott fought and in 1944. He was injured and captured and many years later he wrote about his experiences:

Show the film or read an extract of John Potts letter and account.

The journey to the site where John fought was extremely emotional for his family – it helped them to realise what his experiences meant to him and how it affected his life. Knowing John's story also made his family relate more closely to the events of World War Two and has made them want to encourage people to understand and take part in Remembrance.



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They were lucky that John returned, when so many others did not. By remembering John Pott, his family is also remembering all those that John knew, those who fought alongside him, the men in his battalion who were killed and all those who helped him.

Moment of reflection

At this time of year, we wear a Poppy to remember all those whose lives are affected by wars in the past and also in the present. We are reminded that wars are the story of lots of individual people and that those people could be our relatives and our friends. We are reminded that wars damage lives and that we can all play a part in working for a peaceful world.

Prayer or Poem:

The suggested poem is one by John Jarman, a British poet and mathematician who served in World War Two. He was killed during the Normandy landing in 1944, at the age of 33, leaving a widow and a daughter.

At A War Grave

No grave is rich, the dust that herein lies
Beneath this white cross mixing with the sand
Was vital once, with skill of eye and hand
And speed of brain. These will not re-arise
These riches, nor will they be replaced;
They are lost and nothing now, and here is left
Only a worthless corpse of sense bereft,
Symbol of death, and sacrifice and waste.