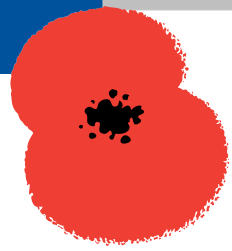


A week learning and Remembering the First World War

Introduction – the five assemblies here can be used for the week before Remembrance Sunday. The poem currently listed as day 5 can be used on Armistice Day (11th November) if you wish. After the first days assembly the assemblies for days 2, 3, and 4 can in fact be used in any order.



DAY 1: WEARING A POPPY

In preparation:

- The Royal British Legion CD Rom, for pictures and poetry to project on the screen.
- Screen

Start

Show one of the pictures of a Poppy from the CD Rom – The pictures 'The Royal British Legion' has plenty. (And make sure you are wearing a Poppy!)

Script:

What is this a picture of? What am I wearing? Do you wear a Poppy?

The Poppy is a symbol of Remembrance – that means it helps us to remember something.

What does the Poppy helps us to remember?

The Poppy is a very special symbol that reminds of something very particular – it is the symbol of Remembrance Day. Remembrance Day is the day for us to remember all the people who have fought, been killed, injured or had their lives affected by war.

Do you know why the Poppy was chosen? Let me read you a poem:

(show the Poem on the screen)

In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

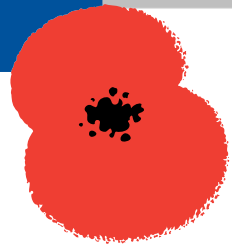
In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

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That poem was written during the First World War. It was written by a Canadian, John McCrae who was serving as a doctor in the First World War. After a long day of trying to save the lives of those who had been injured in battle, he saw the poppies growing. The poppies became a symbol for him.

Do you know when the First World War was?

It was 1914 to 1918. Do you know what day that war finished. It's why we are wearing a Poppy now?

It finished on 11 November. The War came to an end on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

So if it finished in 1918, how many years is it since the end of the First World War? 90 years since the end of the War.

If the War ended all those years ago, why do we still remember it? Well the events of that war changed what people thought about war for ever. The First World War was on such a large scale that many men of all ages were asked and then ordered to join up to fight. Boys from the ages of 16 into their thirties (and sometimes older) went to fight. Much of the fighting took place in Belgium and France (these countries were our Allies), but others fought in the Middle East, North Africa and elsewhere.

In the First World War 750,000 men from Britain were killed and approximately 10 million lives were lost from all around the world.

It also affected the lives of millions of other people – those people who lost sons, husbands, fathers and brothers. The women had to do the work that men had previously done. Many people had their lives changed forever.

After the First World War, people had to get on with their lives so the Poppy was adopted as a symbol to be worn on the anniversary of the day the war had finished - one day a year, so that all those people killed and affected by the war could remember and be remembered.

Since that war there have been other wars. Now we wear the Poppy **every** year to remember all the people who have fought and been affected by war.

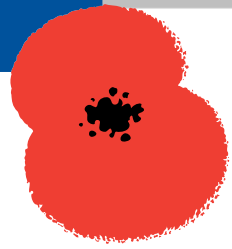
This year, because it is 90 years since the end of the First World War, the war that created Remembrance Day, we are going to learn about some of those people that were there and why the poppy became so special for us to wear.

Moment of reflection

The Poppy is a symbol that we can all wear. It can help us all to remember the horrors of war, to think about and hope for those people who fight in them and those people who are affected by them. The Poppy can help us to remember how important peace is.

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Prayer or Poem:

Isaac Rosenberg was born in 1890 to a poor Jewish family in Britain. He grew up in East London and with help was able to get work as an artist and a poet. He joined the British Forces in October 1915 and was sent to France. He was killed in battle in April 1918.

In The Trenches

by Isaac Rosenberg (1916)

I snatched two poppies
From the parapet's ledge,
Two bright red poppies
That winked on the ledge.
Behind my ear
I stuck one through,
One blood red poppy
I gave to you.
The sandbags narrowed
And screwed out our jest,
And tore the poppy
You had on your breast ...
Down - a shell - O! Christ,
I am choked ... safe ... dust blind, I
See trench floor poppies
Strewn. Smashed you lie.