



2. Count your blessings

Age range: Primary

Theme: *We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. We begin this academic year with a reminder that it's good to be grateful. Research reveals the importance of gratitude even in the midst of adversity: that being aware of each day's 'blessings' can counteract anxiety, and so this term, we want to encourage schools to continue to do this through their collective worship. We provide a script with reflective ideas for classroom use and PowerPoint; both have additional content that you may wish to spread across the week and use in classrooms to ensure that you are meeting the requirement for daily collective worship and to support the spiritual flourishing of your whole school community.*

*You may need to tailor this script to suit the needs, age range & levels of concerns of your school community, which of course includes adults as well as children. **This collective worship sets the theme for the rest of the term's assemblies – and is an idea that you will return to often. Whilst this theme suggests that we should always look on the bright side of life, we are not suggesting that you ignore any very real sadnesses that pupils may be feeling.***



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

Use this section to reference your school's values with the idea of **being grateful**. There is a specific opportunity suggested within the script (slide 12).

How might this link with the Guildford Diocese spirituality offer?

This icons in this section show how the collective worship theme links with the elements of **self, others, beauty** and/or **beyond**

 **What our 'blessings' might be, which might include the beauty around us**

 **Ways in which we can bless others**

 **How blessings make us grateful; that blessing is at the very heart of God**

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in bold show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. To help any children with visual timetabling, we include an icon for each different part of this collective worship in the top right corner of each slide.
- The **'Let's do some counting'** game contains some suggestions for younger children, but if you have older ones, take the lead from your maths curriculum – a great way to do a bit of retrieval practice! Please amend these suggestions to suit the age of your class. Or set a challenge to guess the number of beads in a jar.
- You will also need the equipment to make a **Blessing Jar** (see Reflection area ideas, below)

Gathering:

Slide 1: Welcome stilling exercise – rolling dice

Use the stilling slide if desired: the suggested words should be spoken slowly, leaving pauses inbetween to create a sense of stillness.

As you sit quietly, watch the dice rolling....silently count the numbers that you'll see.....[PAUSE]

Now practise slower breathing.....in.....and out.....in.....and out.....keep this going as you continue to watch....[PAUSE]

You maybe notice that you are feeling calmer and more relaxed....[PAUSE]

As you breathe, think about yourself and what you bring into this time today..... [PAUSE]

We come into this special / sacred space and time to be still....to think deeply.....to be together as a school community.....

In our time together today, we will **do some counting (!).....share some words together, and then think together about what they might mean for our school community.**

But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....

- Slides 2/3:** Teach this new greeting to your school community – there are two slightly different versions from the point of view of the leader; choose which best fits your school's context. The words are adapted from [Psalm 118:24](#)
- Leader:** **This is a day that God has made!** OR **Today is a brand new day!**
- ALL:** **We will rejoice* and be glad* in it!**

*There are different BSL signs for rejoicing and joy/gladness. View them here: <https://www.signbsl.com/sign/rejoice>

Engaging:

- Slide 4:** We're going to start our time together today with some counting. There will be some really easy ones – and some more difficult ones, but let's have a go together. *[Go through the age-appropriate ideas you created]*



- **Slide 5:** This term, we are starting a new theme of assemblies together, 'Count your blessings', which will help us to do just this.
- **Slide 6:** But what do we mean? What *are* blessings? *[ask a few children, then summarise their thoughts back to the assembled children]* When people talk about their 'blessings', they usually mean the good things in their lives, the things that they are grateful for.
- **Slide 7:** 'Blessing' is an idea that is shared across many different religions and beliefs, as you can see in the images here. *[from L-R, top-bottom: Ganesh, giver of blessings (Hindu Dharma); Buddhist blessings; Chinese character for 'blessing'; Humanist baby naming ceremony; Buddha with Varada (blessing) mudra (hand positions); Spice box blessing as part of Havdalah (Jewish)]*
A blessing can be a good thing that we have – or it can also be something that we do or give to others to wish them well. It's a noun – and a verb! (Maths and English – in one collective worship!!)
- **Slide 8:** Over recent years, many people have found that thinking about the good things in life, their blessings, helps them to cope better with any challenges that might be going on around them. This is what people mean when they say they are *counting their blessings*. Doing this is good for your mental health, but it's not a new idea! Let's share our words for today together, which were written many hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus – so over 3000 years ago!!
- **Slide 9:** David the Psalmist talked about how it was good for his soul to remember all that God had done for him, all his blessings. Sometimes, especially when we're feeling a bit grumpy, it can be easy to forget all the good things that are part of our lives, but 'counting our blessings' can help us to get things in balance again, and you might even find that the grumpiness disappears.....try it sometime!
- **Slide 10:** Ask children to talk with a partner about the question 'What are *my* blessings?' Establish your ground rules for this – level of noise, how children will know when to stop etc. When the allocated time's up, stop the children and gather some of their ideas onto strips of paper to demonstrate / start off your **Blessing Jar** (see reflection ideas section) There are some suggestions on **Slide 11**.

Slide 12: Responding (and words for worship)

Let's be still and quiet together now....
we've been thinking today about our 'blessings'.....the good things that are part of our lives.....
[name some that you've collected in your jar]....
all these things are *good* things that we can be grateful for.....
and counting them is good for us too!.....
for a few moments, spend some time counting your own blessings now!.....
 [leave some quiet space for reflection]
as we think about others now,
I wonder how we might be a blessing to someone else today?....
....I wonder how our school's vision/values might help us to do this?....



Slide 13: Before we end our time together today, we are going to hear some more words of blessing, which David the Psalmist would have known very well. They are the oldest blessing in the Torah (the Jewish holy book) and the Bible (the holy book for Christians) and have been a way for people to declare blessing over one another since ancient times. Many people believe that God has a heart that wants to bless others. The words say this....

'May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord show you his kindness. May he have mercy on you. May the Lord watch over you and give you peace.'

I'm going to use a short clip of a song that uses these words, not just in English, but also in many other languages across the world....there is one word which you will probably recognise in any language though, so do listen carefully!! *[It's Amen!]*

[Click on the image to link to the video & use as long or short a clip as you would like here]

Now I'm going to invite you to join me in a prayer, where we will remind each other to 'count our blessings'....

Slide 14: The words for us to share if you'd like to join me are **'Help us to count our blessings'....**

God who gives good things...**HELP US TO COUNT OUR BLESSINGS**

When we are sad or weary...**HELP US TO COUNT OUR BLESSINGS**

When we are grumpy or afraid...**HELP US TO COUNT OUR BLESSINGS**

Every day when we gather...**HELP US TO COUNT OUR BLESSINGS**

Slide 15: Amen



Songs to sing:

[Every step](#) (NBD) or [Being a friend](#) (BBC) or [Everyone Matters](#) (NBD)

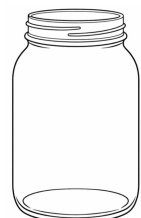
A song to listen to:

This song we use in the script today is simply called 'The Blessing'. During the pandemic, it went viral in Christian communities across the world and was recorded in many different languages. You can view the compilation version here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d48-qbcovVY> There is also a lovely version of children singing, lots of diversity here, from all across the world: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiWZXLsdE9w>

Slide 16: Sending

Leader: As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead....

All: May we **count our blessings!**



Slide 17: Reflection areas

Make a **Blessing Jar** as a class. Use a clean jar or tin, which your class can decorate if they wish.

Think: What are your 'blessings', the things you are grateful for?

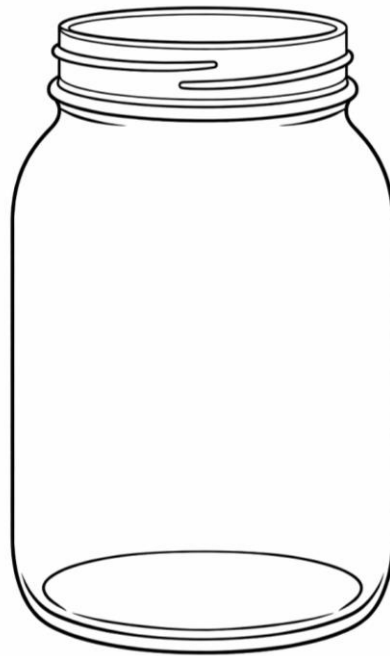
Do: Write or draw your thought on a slip of paper and add it to the jar.

Talk: If you're having a bad day, then use the Blessing Jar! Take out a 'blessing' and remind each other of the good things that you are grateful for.

Additional ideas to build spirituality:

- Create a class 'blessing' that you could use during this series of assemblies, to remind each other of the act of counting our blessings.
- Assemble a playlist (audio and/or visual) of songs to listen to that focus on the idea of blessings and create a listening station for anyone to use in your reflection area. There are some great versions of the now well-known 'Blessing' song that we used in this collective worship, including from different cultures worldwide, in Makaton, and sung by children! There is also the Fischy Music song 'God behind' which has some join-in signing actions you can learn here: <https://www.fischy.com/songs/god-beside/> or a video version here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6fE4pJVtD8>
- Include some children's prayer books in you reflection areas this week. They could bring one from home if they would like to.
- Look at the [Action for Happiness](#) calendar for [Joyful June](#): the calendar quotes 'whilst every day may not be good, there is something good in every day'. Use some of the ideas to help you celebrate each day.





Count your blessings



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If you're having a bad day, then use the Blessing Jar! Take out a 'blessing' and remind each other of the good things that you are grateful for.

