



NATIONAL POETRY DAY

4TH OCTOBER 2018

National Poetry Day Assembly Plan

Suggested poems: (all poems featured in the Schofield & Sims *A Time to Speak and a Time to Listen* anthology and listed in the order in which they are to be read): 1 'Haiku' (Celia Warren); 100 'The Tree and the Pool' (Brian Patten); 69 'These Old Shoes' (Tony Mitton); 78 'The Loom of Time' (Anonymous); 65 'Lion' (Celia Warren); 32 'Laugh and be Merry' (John Masefield).

Preparation: This assembly is useful if individual members of the class are coping with difficult changes at home – divorce, a new baby or the death of a grandparent – or at the start or end of the school year.

Props: Photographs of the pupils as babies, numbered and displayed around the classroom; photocopied lists of the names of pupils who brought photographs, one for each pair of pupils.

A time to change

- Read aloud Poem 1 'Haiku' and ask the pupils to imagine how their parents must have felt when they were born: excited, scared, tired, worried, pleased.
- Play a game. Distribute the photocopied list of pupils' names to each pair. Ask them to examine the baby photos and to match the photo with the classmate, writing the baby-photo number alongside the name of the pupil.
- Bring the class together and compare results, asking each pupil to claim their number in turn, while others tick off which they got right. Did anyone get all correct?
- Discuss how much the pupils have changed: they are now bigger, taller, have more hair, more teeth.

Elicit how their lives have changed – the activities they enjoy, their diet, maybe they have younger siblings. Ask if anyone has moved house. How did it feel? Has anyone changed school? Did it take time to get used to a new teacher?

- Remind the pupils that when they were born they faced the enormous change of suddenly coming into this world. Encourage them to see that all changes are manageable. Again, read together Poem 1 'Haiku'.
- Read the poems in the order in which they are listed above, introducing a fresh aspect to each one. Sometimes we don't like change but nothing 'stands still', Poem 100 'The Tree and the Pool'. Sometimes it's hard to let go of the old and welcome the new, Poem 69 'These Old Shoes'. We can't always see 'the big picture' but in the long run positive things result from difficult changes, Poem 78 'The Loom of Time'. Sometimes it helps to imagine putting our problems in a box and 'opening the lid' on them when we feel strong enough, Poem 65 'Lion'. Whatever we have to deal with, there's usually a way to be happy and smile, and enjoy our lives, Poem 32 'Laugh and be Merry'.
- Explain that the pupils are to use Poems 100, 69, 78, 65 and 32 in a class assembly on 'Change'. Sort them into five groups, with a scribe in each group. Invite them to plan a short introduction to each poem, similar to the examples above.
- Choose five poem readers and five narrators to lead the assembly. Invite them to add prayers or songs as appropriate. They may choose to close with Poem 98 'Prayer for Peace', which shows that we can also choose to change ourselves.

