

**Diocese of Carlisle Board of Education**

**Weekly Headteacher Correspondence**

**Tuesday 24th November:**

**Reflection:**

*“****7****Where can I go from your Spirit?
    Where can I flee from your presence?****8****If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
    if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.****9****If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
    if I settle on the far side of the sea,****10****even there your hand will guide me,
    your right hand will hold me fast.****11****If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me
    and the light become night around me,”****12****even the darkness will not be dark to you;
    the night will shine like the day,
    for darkness is as light to you.” (Psalm 139)*

**Feedback from Headteachers: themes of the week**

It’s been a full on few weeks in our schools and the support of colleagues continues to be very important. Many colleagues report that personal bonds are deepening as colleagues look to find ways to help and support one another, professionally and personally.

Financial worries continue for our leaders – questions around how to support shielding teachers, what to do about maternity leave, how to cover when supply teachers have been arranged but then have to pull out due to personal disruption from covid. Extra staffing bills can be eye-watering.

Teaching Heads’ commitment is often heavy. It’s even heavier right now, in some cases up to 4/5 days teaching/cover per week. The constant problem solving required at the moment was agreed as being a significant factor in Heads’ levels of fatigue. The ‘what’s the point?’ question/feeling has not been uncommon.

Some schools are also contending with buildings/maintenance challenges. These are often felt more keenly in winter: one Head talked about the restructures and rebuild in their school and having no heating at the moment.

How are we giving our communities and children HOPE at the moment? And ourselves? We shared some stories about what we are doing to lift ourselves up, encouraging each other:

* At one school the entire community has been engaged with making a nativity film. The idea emerged from wanting to do something for the village and reaching out to the community volunteers who are not able to be in school right now. The script was written by Yr 5/6 pupils and considers the nativity story as it may have played out set in covid times! The creative process has been renewing for the whole community and has drawn interest from a local hospital who are hoping to show the film on its wards in December.
* Listening to 90s (70s? 80s?) dance music – LOUDLY.
* Writing a post-it note detailing ‘One thing I am going to do FOR MYSELF today’ and sticking it somewhere where you won’t forget about it – and then doing what’s on the note!
* Leaning hard into informal and formal support networks – your cluster, your mate who is a Head at the other end of the country – anywhere where you feel safe and can ‘let off steam’ (sometimes quite colourfully!). These spaces can inspire and encourage, they offer places to seek and give support, as well as helping us to gain perspective on the challenges we are encountering.
* Standing at the school gate to welcome each child in to school every morning, making eye contact with everyone to give that much-needed social contact and encouragement.
* Constantly reminding ourselves that **we cannot control everything**. Keep your focus on the question ‘What can I/we control RIGHT NOW?’ Speak to colleagues. Plan together. Don’t do it alone and don’t look too far ahead.
* Watching videos that celebrate the human spirit, God’s spirit in us, endurance and hope:
	+ ‘Rise Up’ - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwgr_IMeEgA>
	+ ‘Resiliency - motivational video’ - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNQhuFL6CWg>

**We talked about the need to call to mind your ‘WHY’** – this is going to keep you on your feet more than anything else. Why did you become a *teacher*? Why did you become a *leader*? Reflect on your vocation, your unique calling, and allow that connection to your primary motivator the space to surface.

**Information sharing from the Diocese:**

**Living in Love and Faith**

The Church of England has recently produced a suite of resources called ‘Living in Love and Faith.’ The hope is for people across the country to use the LLF resources to study and pray together. This church-wide learning together, listening to one another, and listening to God is part of discerning a way forward for the Church of England in relation to matters of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. The resources are designed to encourage and enable engagement and learning in a variety of settings and can be accessed here:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/living-love-and-faith>

**A Cornucopia of Advent and Christmas resources:**

As we approach Christmas, these free resources for collective worship may be of help to you:

**iSingPOP Christmas Watch Party**

 iSingPOP wants to help bring Christmas cheer during these unusual times and have recently launched a FREE online Christmas resource for schools - an iSingPOP Watch Party.  The school is provided with a template with 4 iSingPOP Christmas songs, some animation of the Christmas story with opportunities for the school to add in readings and contributions from the Head and, if appropriate, the local Vicar or a member of the local church.

All this can then be made available to the school community for parents and children to enjoy together at home**.** The link to sign up is <https://www.isingpop.org/christmas-the-gift>.  We’ve had so many schools contacting us about whether we could do anything for Christmas that we felt we had to provide this ***FREE*** resource for all to be able to access and enjoy.

**Faith at Home partner - Big Start Assemblies**

Schools can access a large range of collective worship resources for free this academic year as a result of a generous offer from one of the CEEO’s Faith at Home partners, **Essential Christian.** They have made the entire series of ***‘Big Start Assemblies’*** available for 12 months for all Church of England schools. This set of resources has over 100 collective worships on all kinds of themes. You can see all of this at [https://bigstartassemblies.org/](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fbigstartassemblies.org%2F&data=04%7C01%7Candy.wolfe%40churchofengland.org%7C42604d21cb304041bacf08d8872287f5%7C95e2463b3ab047b49ac1587c77ee84f0%7C0%7C0%7C637407929678022538%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=rEcmeuBL13Nf8qxgfrWOSDEd1IKPfPfHiRs7Y9jgIBU%3D&reserved=0)

In order to access this resource, please contact education@carlislediocese.org.uk and Morven will share the Diocesan access code with you.

**Chelmsford Diocese – Lord’s Prayer resource**

Our colleagues in Chelmsford Diocese have prepared a collective worship resource on the Lord's Prayer that their schools are using this term. It is not time-limited and can be accessed here:

<https://www.cdbe.org.uk//schools/collective-worship/the-lords-prayer>

**Safeguarding online**

As schools consider how best they might share online Christmas performance safely with families, the South West Grid for Learning - a charity concerned with online safety - has released some timely and very useful guidance on virtual performances. It includes a model letter for parents.

<https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/swgfl-release-new-resource-for-schools-planning-online-performances/>

“And I'll rise up
I'll rise like the day
I'll rise up
I'll rise unafraid
I'll rise up
And I'll do it a thousand times again”

‘Rise Up’ - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwgr_IMeEgA>