

Gathering

Follow the school's normal gathering routines, using words of liturgy which are familiar to students and adults

or

Light a candle and offer the following prayer: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you'. Response: *and also with you*. (To support pupil understanding of the Christian belief in God as Trinity here, why not light a single candle which has three wicks, lighting them in turn as each 'person' is acknowledged?)

Engagement

- 1) Question: When is a promise a promise? Invite the school community to reflect individually or in discussion and then invite some ideas.

- 2) Then, show the following reflection:

"A promise is a promise when the words of the promise have love behind them. For instance, getting married is all about promise; it is one of the deepest promises two human beings can make to each other. It is a promise of love."

Show some wedding pictures via the PowerPoint. You could even ask staff to share their own wedding photos.

- 3) Question: What do you think are the most important promises people make when they get married?
- 4) Watch film clip of traditional vows being shared: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bpw8a8uo_xk (stop video after woman has said her vows). Then show Vows on board and consider what these vows are promising.
- 5) Explain that these actors are not actually married through saying these words together. They were not real promises. They were just acting / didn't really mean it / not in love. (The two underlined are the key answers to draw out). It is the love that two people have for each other that helps them keep their deep promises to each other (show picture of 'red heart + red heart = Promise lived'.)
- 6) Question: Why do you think marriage promises sometimes break down? (could ask for answers or have as personal reflection). "The promise stops being a real promise when the love dies." Show a video of a marital row from Eastenders (www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAro9F-ZLg8).
- 7) We will have seen the final two lines of the marriage vows make mention of God: 'According to God's holy law.' 'In the presence of God I make this vow.' His name is there in the Vows because God is all about perfect love ('God is love' - 1 John 4:16; 'There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out all fear' - 1 John 4:18).

- 8) Question for reflection: Do you think it is easier to keep a promise if someone else can share in helping keep that promise? Have you ever helped someone keep their promise? God can help people keep their marriage promises because He knows all about love and how tough love sometimes can be, because He is love. The Marriage Vows are a kind of prayer – asking for God's help, support and love.

Response

Prayer action: "We can ask God for help to keep our promises, even promises we have made to him. Remember a promise only really lives if there is love behind it; love for a friend, for family, or for God. But God can help us with the love that we need behind any promise that is really deep and meaningful."

Question for reflection: Are there any promises we have made which we need God's help to keep? If you'd like to, take a moment now to prayerfully commit your thoughts to God.

Sending

Follow normal sending routines for collective worship.