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**Welcome** to the *Assembly Team* Resource Pack! This book of scripts and guidance, accompanied by our *Starting a School Assembly Team* DVD and *Take a Look* CD, will outline everything you need to know when setting up a new *Assembly Team*.

### What is an Assembly Team?

Our *Assembly Teams* are made up of between 5 and 8 volunteers who go into local primary schools and dramatise stories from the Bible. We usually visit the same school on a weekly basis, so that over the year the children get an overview of the entire Bible. These 15 minute assemblies use exciting songs, puppets, costumes and props to grab the children's attention. They also get fully involved in the action as pupils dress up and play a part too.

In 1999 a group from Bedford started telling Bible stories in school assemblies. Their model began to grow and spread further afield until in 2006 a Christian charity called *In Another Place* adopted and modified it to create their *Assembly Teams*. There are other models that have formed from this same original group in Bedford. For example *Open the Book*, a national organisation affiliated with *The Bible Society*, also has the same roots as our *Assembly Teams*. There are some differences however; for example we use action songs, but *In Another Place* believe in working alongside similar ministries whenever we can. Visit [www.openthebook.net](http://www.openthebook.net) for more information on the *Open the Book* model.

*Assembly Teams* started in Crosby, Merseyside, where they now perform Bible Stories to thousands of children each week. New teams are being set up in other areas of the country too. They are an excellent way for primary schools to meet community cohesion or spiritual and moral inspection requirements and fit nicely with the statutory obligation for a daily act of collective worship. More importantly, *Assembly Teams* bring local churches together to engage with their community and share God's love with children who might not otherwise have the opportunity.

### Who are *In Another Place*?

*In Another Place* aims to take the Good News outside church walls in a way that brings Christians and community together. We do this through large community theatre performances and smaller projects and teams that run on a more regular basis. In addition to our *Assembly Teams*, we also have a large Gospel Choir, an 18-30s group and a youth ministry. Our large events are unique, creative and aim to be inclusive so that anyone can get involved.

Founded in 2005, we took our name and inspiration from Anthony Gormley's *Another Place* Iron Men statues at Crosby beach, where our first performances were produced. Since then, *In Another Place* has developed many unique theatre and performance events including *The Narnia Experience* and our work with Giant Puppets.

### What is in the *Assembly Team* Resource Pack?

In this resource pack, there is a school year's worth of *Assembly Team* scripts, plus a few extra. They are separated into three terms. The autumn term, has stories from the Old Testament, ending with

the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Then Spring term looks at the life of Jesus, the stories he told and concludes with his death and resurrection in time for Easter. Finally, the Summer Term has scripts that tell what happened after Jesus returned to Heaven and the adventures of the early church.

*Assembly Team* scripts are considered more as a guideline than a definitive story that must be recited precisely. Aside from the Narrator, each character speaks without reading from a script. However it is sufficient to learn the gist of a line or speech instead of word for word. Although it is worth noting that a fellow team member may be relying on a specific cue to say their lines. It is always advisable to rehearse properly before performing in an assembly! We have found it's easiest for volunteers to stay after the assembly and rehearse for the following week in that same morning.

We have also included in this book a suggested format for an assembly. In the same way that our scripts are more like guidelines, *Assembly Teams* can be flexible to suit the needs of their members and the schools they perform in. The outline described in this book and the demonstrations shown on our *Starting a School Assembly Team* DVD, are an excellent reference point for you to use as you develop your own personal style.

We highly recommend the use of songs as children love to join in. Our *Take a Look* album is perfect for use in *Assembly Teams* and you can see us demonstrate some of the actions on our *YouTube* channel (see *In Another Place* Contact Details below). *Take a Look* features original songs written by Annie Spiers, the author of the

world famous "Who's the King of the Jungle (ooo ooo!)" You can order *Take a Look* and other resources by contacting *In Another Place* using the details outlined on page 4.

## What else is needed to start an Assembly Team?

*Assembly Teams* need volunteers willing to commit one morning a week. The Bible stories can usually be performed with around 4 adults (occasionally we ask an older child to read a small part e.g. an angel with one line). However an *Assembly Team* should aim to have at least six members available to cover any extra roles or if a team member needs to miss a week.

Absolutely anyone can get involved, even those who don't have acting experience. *In Another Place* has many stories of individuals, young and old, who have found new confidence and a sense of achievement performing in a way they never expected. We encourage churches to work together, drawing members of their local *Assembly Team(s)* from different denominations and backgrounds. In fact, volunteers don't necessarily have to attend church at all!

*Assembly Teams* also need to cultivate a supply of props and costumes. Each script suggests what props are required for the Bible story. These can be accumulated over time and are usually created from cardboard and a bit of paint. The costumes are usually the same each week, with the occasional specialist character such as a pharaoh, King, soldier or Angel. These need to be both in adult and child sizes. You may be able to recruit others who do not want to perform in an *Assembly Team* but are willing to construct some props, be creative or have a go at sewing.

Once an *Assembly Team's* collection of props and costumes is complete they can be used year after year, with only storage to think about. It is also possible for five teams to use the same set of props and costumes in a locality, each going to schools on different days of the week. More information on props is available on our *Starting a School Assembly Team* DVD and can be ordered by contacting *In Another Place* using the details outlined on page 4.

Finally, an *Assembly Team* needs primary schools to visit. It is possible to go into three schools in a morning. Assemblies take around 15 minutes, so with 9, 10 and 11am starts there's plenty of time to travel to another school and set up if they are not too far apart. It can take a bit of effort and persistence to arrange your first assemblies. Faith schools are often the most enthusiastic, but state schools are just as welcoming. As mentioned above, *Assembly Teams* meet the community cohesion and spiritual and moral inspection requirements of a Primary School. They also fit nicely with the statutory obligation for a daily act of collective worship, wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian nature. Initially you may need to offer a one off visit to give an *Assembly Team* taster or go in fortnightly while the team is established. Schools may also ask for a DBS certificate (formally CRB) from each *Assembly Team* member. Local churches should have the facility to help individuals apply if they do not already have one.

### *In Another Place* Contact Details:

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### **Social Media:**

Why not search *In Another Place* on *Facebook* or follow @IAPCrosby on *Twitter*?

Visit [www.youtube.com/user/InAnotherPlaceCrosby](http://www.youtube.com/user/InAnotherPlaceCrosby) for an *Assembly Team* trailer, the actions to many of the songs on our *Take a Look* CD and so much more!

You can also keep up to date with all that's going on at *In Another Place* by signing up to our mailing list. Just fill in the simple form on the Contact page on our website.

### **Assembly Team suggested Format**

Outlined below is just one of the many possible ways that *Assembly Team* resources can be used. We know that every school is different and our model is flexible to suit whatever format is required. You may also want to develop your own individual style and presentation techniques. Here is a sample of what we have found works well and some suggestions you may find helpful, especially in the early stages of setting up your own *Assembly Team*.

#### **1. Arrive early**

Aim to arrive 10 - 15 minutes before the assembly is scheduled to start. The time needed to set up will depend on story and props required. It is advisable to give yourself plenty of time so you're not flustered or arriving when the children are already sitting in the hall. Punctuality and timekeeping is important to schools.

#### **2. Play songs as children enter**

As the children enter the hall (usually in single file) encourage them to join in with the team as you sing songs and demonstrate the actions. It is amazing how simply saying "Beautiful singing" or "Wow! Brilliant actions here" will motivate others to join in with gusto. We highly recommend using our *Take a Look* CD. You can see the actions on our *YouTube* channel (see Contact Details on page 4).

Performing action songs at the start of an assembly is an excellent way to engage the children and prepare them to take an interactive role in the assembly. They also really enjoy it! It

may initially take them time to warm to new songs and expectations, but it is definitely worth persevering with this.

Be aware that some schools have their own structure for entering and leaving the hall. They may have a classic music piece or prefer silence. Schools often make an exception for *Assembly Teams* because the children love it so much, but it is wise to check with a teacher first.

#### **3. Introduction**

A teacher may or may not introduce you to the children so initially one member of the *Assembly Team* may have to explain who you are. Be aware that when you say "Good Morning" it is often customary to have a variant of "Good Morning Assembly Team" in response, although in the early assemblies they may need reminding of what to call you.

It is a good idea to start by asking if they can remember the story from last week. They should automatically put their hands up rather than shout out. Use encouraging statements like "excellent memory," "do you remember his name?" or "that's right, can anyone tell me what happened after that?" It's not uncommon to get wrong or strange answers and some children go blank when asked. Try and be positive even when correcting them. Here are some examples of phrases you can use or modify:

"Oh dear, did you forget. Let's ask someone else to help us remember."

"That's really close, but not quite."

“Wow! That’s a good memory. We did that story a couple of weeks ago.”

“Great try but it’s not the answer I was looking for.”

“I’m not quite sure what you mean, but well done for trying.”

This should only last a few minutes. They may need some hints and help to fill in the gaps. It’s good practice to summarise an answer you have been given to ensure everyone has heard.

#### 4. **Recruit volunteers from the audience**

Tell the children that you will need a few helpers to put on a costume and take part in the story. Ask them only to put their hands up if they haven’t had a go before and tell them you’re only choosing people sitting sensibly. You can ask the teachers to pick if you prefer.

Get other Assembly Team members to help the volunteers put on the simple costumes over their school uniforms. They may need a brief instruction before hand, but on the whole *Assembly Team* members will guide the children when needed during the performance.

#### 5. **Emphasize the Bible**

It can be helpful to start introducing that morning’s story while the other *Assembly Team* members are still helping the children with costumes. This stops the rest of the school become restless while they wait.

You can use your discretion as to whether or not the Bible story requires a short preamble to set the scene. They usually stand alone well without needing an introduction.

Ask the children what book all these stories come from. This is an important question to ask each week. They may not be able to answer it to begin with. You could then sing “Open the Book” from the *Take a Look* CD as a kind of *Assembly Team* theme song.

#### 6. **Perform the Story**

Use the scripts in this book to act out a story from the bible. Once or twice a term the scripts have been written to be performed by puppets. This is an entertaining variant for an assembly, but you can use actors instead.

When the story is over, remember to applaud your volunteers from the audience, help them take off their costumes and allow them to return to their seats.

#### 7. **Summarize the story**

It is helpful for children to repeat what they have just seen. Use positive questioning techniques described earlier in point 3. Ask them questions like “was there anything surprising that happened in that story?” You may want to point out a simple theme, moral or value.

#### 8. **Sing a song**

Choose a song that in some way connects with what the Bible story has been about. Each script has a suggested song from

our *Take a Look* album. You can ask everyone to stand up quietly before you start so they can join in with the actions (including teachers!)

### 9. Pray

Finish with a short prayer. It can be a simple thank you or to ask God to remind us later of something specific we have learnt in assembly. We suggest you introduce the prayer by saying something along the lines of "We're going to pray now. You can join in by closing your eyes and putting your hands together or you can sit quietly and listen." This is particularly important in state schools or in areas with a high multi-faith population

### 10. Play songs as children leave

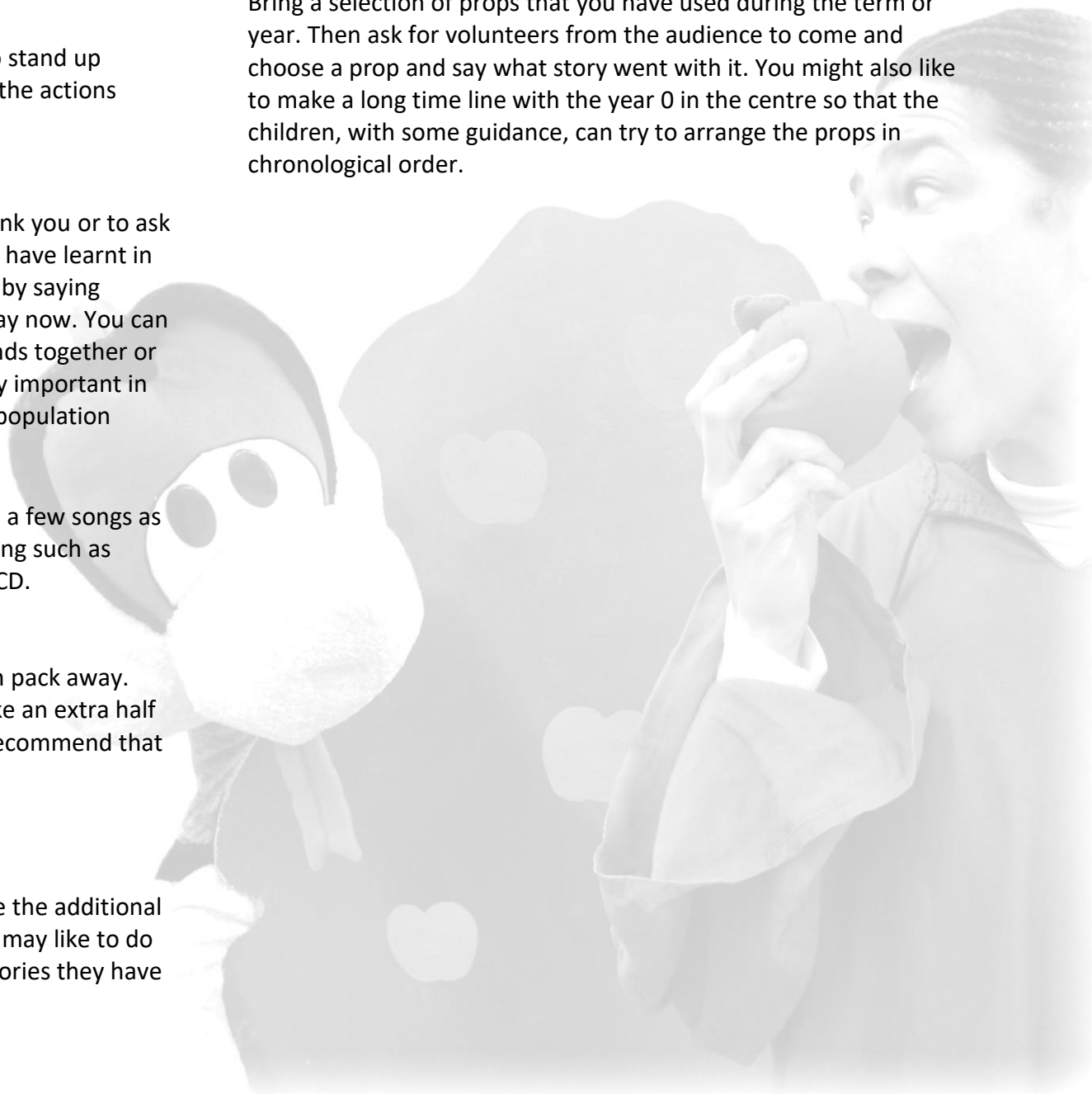
In the same way as when they entered, perform a few songs as they leave. You may want to choose a calmer song such as "You've Gotta Act Justly" from our *Take a Look* CD.

Once the children have gone the *Assembly Team* can pack away. You may have another school to go to or want to take an extra half an hour to rehearse for next week's assembly. We recommend that you also spend some time praying together.

### End of term/year Assembly

School terms vary in length and you may need to use the additional spare stories included in this pack. Alternatively you may like to do a whole assembly on reminding the children what stories they have heard. This is also an excellent way to end the year.

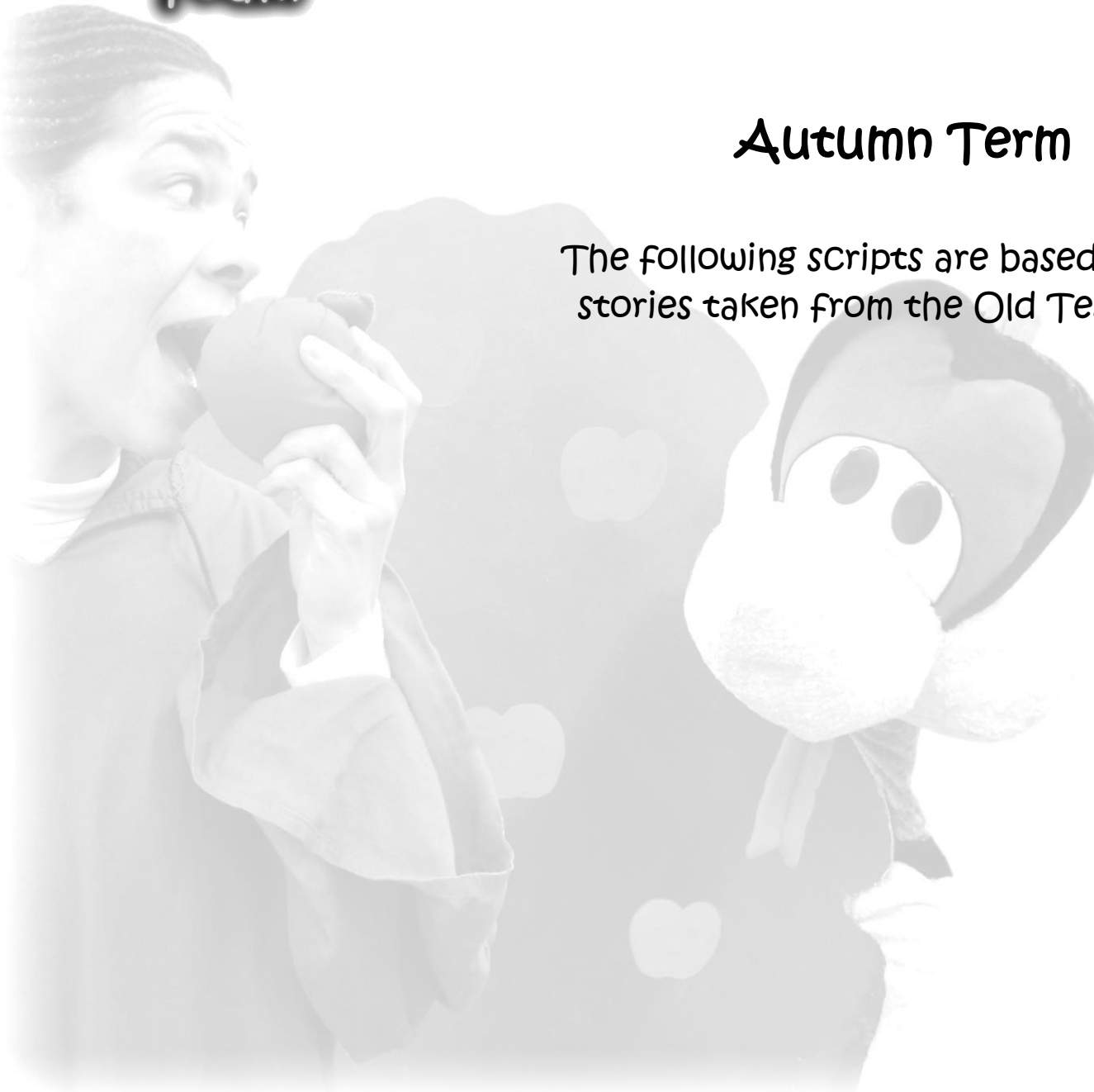
Bring a selection of props that you have used during the term or year. Then ask for volunteers from the audience to come and choose a prop and say what story went with it. You might also like to make a long time line with the year 0 in the centre so that the children, with some guidance, can try to arrange the props in chronological order.





## Autumn Term

The following scripts are based on Bible stories taken from the Old Testament



### Autumn Term: Old Testament Genesis 1

#### 1a: In the Beginning

**Characters:** Narrator and God

**Children:** Hold pictures

**Props:** Creation pictures

**Narr:** At first, there wasn't anything at all. Nothing!  
So God set to work. But he didn't use his hands, or a special machine. He spoke, that's all. He said:

**God:** I'd like some light.

**Narr:** And there was light. Brighter than a summer morning or a thousand Christmas candles. God spoke again. He said:

**God:** Sky. I'd like some sky. And some water underneath.

**Narr:** And, sure enough, there it was. The bright blue sky.  
With the dark blue heavens above it, and the blue-green sea below.

**God:** Earth.

**Narr:** That's what God said next, hard and firm, as if he really meant it. And the blue-green waters parted, and there was dry land underneath. Great patches of it, dirt black and brown. Here and there, all over the world.

**God:** We need some colour...

**Narr:** God whispered, as if he were thinking out loud. And, quivering with excitement, green growing things crept right up out of the dark earth, then burst into blossom – red, orange and blue! Pine trees and palm trees. Rose bushes and blackberry bushes. Tulips and chrysanthemums.  
God shouted next:

**God:** Day – shining sun! Night – shining moon! Bright shining stars!

**Narr:** And there they were...for morning and evening, summer and winter – time and heat and light!  
After that, God called to the sky, as if he were expecting some kind of an answer.

**God:** Come forth, flying things!

**Narr:** And through the clouds they came. Flying high and flying low. Flying large and flying small. Eagles and insects. Hummingbirds and hawks.

**Narr:** Then God called to the sea:

**God:** Come forth, splashing things!

**Narr:** And they came to him, too, leaping right up through the waves. Sailfish and swordfish. Dolphins and trout. Great grinning hump-backed whales.  
Finally, God called to the earth:

**God:** Come forth, walking things, crawling things, running, hopping, climbing things!

**Narr:** And sure enough, they came. Up from burrows. Down from trees. Out of the high grass, and across the open plains. Now everything was ready. Good and ready. So God spoke again:

**God:** Man and woman...

**Narr:** ...is what he said, as if he were calling the names of his very best friends. And out of the dust came Adam and Eve. To enjoy all that God had made. To take care of it for him. And to talk with him.

**God:** This is the way things ought to be!

**Narr:** God said at last.

**God:** This is **good!**

**Song:** The Butterfly Song

**Note:** You might like to perform this story in the same assembly as *1b: A Sad Day*.

You could have a very quick question and answer between the stories, explaining how God made a good world but something must have gone wrong because the world we live in now is not so perfect.