



## ***A practical guide***

### **What is a Tree of Love?**

Trees of Love have been a familiar part of life in Pilgrims Hospices for many years. They began life as the focal point of a carol service event with a Christmas tree at each of our sites in Thanet, Canterbury and Ashford, with personalised tags to commemorate loved ones who had died and were missed, particularly at Christmas.

We would like to give schools the opportunity to use the principle of Trees of Love to create a special carol service that will give pupils and staff an opportunity to remember people special to them. After all, Christmas is a time when we think about everybody else, so what better way to pay tribute to those you love and/or care about than by making a personal dedication on a tree.

### **What should go into a Tree of Love service?**

- A Tree of Love service consists of carol singing, readings and simple prayers, but essentially it is a time of remembrance.
- This usually takes place fairly early in the service when the tree lights are lit, thus illuminating the tree containing the names of loved ones being remembered.
- This should be followed by a short time of silence, giving pupils the chance to remember.
- This silence might be followed by a short prayer of dedication. The pause for remembrance is the most important element of a Tree of Love service.

### **How to decorate the tags?**

- Our tags are ready to be decorated. Why not encourage your pupils to use crayons, coloured pens, paint, glitter and glue to decorate them in their own unique way?
- Then write the name of the person or animal you're dedicating the tag to, on the section which says 'To' and then sign your name under the section which says 'From'.

### **How you might like to hang the tags?**

- Tags can be hung on a single tree before the start of the carol service, so that after the service the children can go up and view them.
- Or why not hang tags class by class at the actual carol service. This might involve children filing in a class group at a time and adding their tag to the tree via a rep from each class.
- Alternatively, why not have a tree in each class room and hang the tags up separately.

**What if there are not enough tags?**

- You should have received the appropriate number of tags and strings, but if for any reason you need more tags, then please do not hesitate to contact Joanne Spiteri on 07753 850 568.

**How can you make the service your own?**

- Your service can be tailored to reflect the particular experiences of your school, for example a dedicated service to people out in the community, special people to the children, or a pupil/staff bereavement.

**Should you encourage competition?**

- Why not hold a competition for the best decorated tag in each class?

**Should there be a talk about the hospice leading up to your service?**

- We are readily available to come and do a talk leading up to your carol service, so that your pupils are more aware of what a hospice is and how important it is to the local community.

**How would you go about raising money for the hospice?**

- We would like to suggest that you encourage the children to come in and make a donation for their tag to remember somebody special, but this is not compulsory.

**How should we send the money to you?**

- You could either send us a cheque for Pilgrims Hospices at 56 London Road, Canterbury, CT2 8JA, or we could pick up the cash from you. We are also happy to count up the collection money on your behalf.

**For more information or help, please contact Joanne Spiteri on 07753 850 568.**