

Summer and Winter solstice

1. As pupils enter

Display the picture of **Stonehenge** and play your chosen music.

2. Introduction

Ask the assembly to identify some of the ways that summer is different from winter. Gather responses and steer the discussion towards an acknowledgement that the days are longer and warmer in summer. Ask the assembly if anyone knows *why* the days are longer and warmer in summer. Gather responses again (children may suggest that the Earth is nearer the sun during the summer, but this is not so). Ask if anyone knows what a 'solstice' is? Gather responses and tell everyone that the video they are about to watch is about the summer and winter solstices and some of the ways they're celebrated around the world. While they watch the video, ask the assembly to think about how important the solstices would have been to people in the past.

3. Play the video

The duration is 4' 43". Final words: '...days and nights in our own way.'

4. After the video - Time to talk

Lead a discussion about the seasons of the year by asking:

- Now that you've seen the video can you say why we get seasons on planet Earth? (*Because Earth's axis is tilted - looking for awareness that it's related to the axis, not how far or close the sun is*)
- Some people say they like the summer and some people say they prefer the winter. Which season do you like best - and why? (*Gather responses*)
- Imagine you are living long ago - as long ago as the people who created Stonehenge. Why is the sun so important to you? (*The sun is needed for light, warmth and to grow crops - it is essential to life*)
- Why do you think those people living long ago would have celebrated the solstices. Which solstice do you think may have been more important to them - summer or winter? (*Gather responses*)

Finally, if your assembly is happening in mid-summer, invite the children to: 'Turn to the person next to you and tell them what you most like doing on the longest day - the summer solstice.'

5. Opportunity to sing

An opportunity to sing your chosen song.

Video page



6. Opportunity to reflect

Focus your reflection on the way the seasons change between the summer and winter solstices.

Sit quietly and think about how life must have been very different in the past, when the changing seasons would have had such an impact on people's lives...

The summer and winter solstices remain important to us now as well... and are celebrated around the world. Think about the things you like to do in the summer...and the things you like to do in the winter...and how different they are...

7. Opportunity for prayer

Begin with your usual form of address ('Dear God', 'Let us pray', etc) and:

Thank you for the variety of the ever-changing seasons, which give us the summer and winter solstices.

Thank you for all the special things we're able to do in the long summer days and the winter days too.

Help us to appreciate the sun and the light, heat, and food it gives us. Amen.