

Developing Collective Worship

First Steps in Worship

Some ideas just to get the ball rolling...

Establish some simple opening responses and closing responses such as ...

Peace be with you

And also with you

This is the day that the Lord has made

Let us rejoice and be glad together

Let us go in peace

We go in peace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ

The Love of God

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all

Experiment with creating responses to go with your vision or the various Church seasons

Use a simple ritual such as lighting a candle. You don't need to explain the lighting of the candle every time, just do it and hold a moment's silence. At the end you can extinguish the candle, again in silence or during the response.

- Music can be used during the gathering or sending out.
- The school can sing as they gather and depart.

These can be used regularly to create a frame for the worship

Singing worship

- Sing a **range** of songs, some of which are well known
- Participants can choose favourites
- Only teach **one or two** new songs
- Sing something seasonal
- Ask a child to choose a favourite verse and say why they like it – pause for a brief silent reflection afterwards
- Close with a short prayer

Celebration assembly

- An opportunity to celebrate our gifts within the community
- Still begin and end with the responses as on other days
- Celebration of abilities and skills is a way of recognising each of us as a 'child of God' SIAMS p 29
- A good occasion on which to use the Lord's Prayer – particularly if parents are present, it is a prayer known to many
- Use thanksgiving prayers for the gifts that we have been given

Story Worship

- Use a Bible story to reflect on – this is a common form of worship. The stories are often chosen to link to a theme or church season.
- Responses can vary according to the season

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- The story can be shared in a variety of ways, reading, drama, video, audio
- Build a collect based on the story – if children become confident with the collect form (see Developmental Prayer File) they can become pretty adept at improvising them!
- Resist the temptation to turn the occasion into a quiz
- Ask the participants what the story means to them – reflect on the answers. Again, resist the temptation to find *the* meaning. Older children can be prompted to discuss why they think a story or passage means something.

Visual Worship

- With the range of material available on the internet a range of images, or a video clip can be used to engage children
- As with the story participants can share how the images make them feel
- This is very suitable for reflection on creation or charitable concerns
- A short Bible reading might be appropriate

Values Worship

- Use the developmental prayer resource to help create intercessions based around values
- Encourage children to suggest stories that embody values, ask them to share what these might be
- Reflect on where values have been seen in the life of the school:
 - ... in the life of the local community
 - ... in the news
- Don't forget to link the values to the school vision

Offering Worship

- A time to acknowledge the contributions made by members of the community
- Connects with ideas of stewardship and responsibility
- Use an opening which sets the scene for understanding what we do as offering to God
 - All things come from you, **and of your own have we given you.**
- Gather collections for charities together and pray for the collection to be well used
 - Clergy could add a blessing for the use of the gifts
 - Invite a charity representative to the occasion

Prayers can be written by children – they don't all need to be written at once allow them to build up over time. Some guidance can be found in the Developmental Prayer file. In addition to being an important aspect of SIAMS in its own right (Strand 6) it can also bring out Trinitarian distinctions.

Songs can relate to the Church season. The words can be a resource for reflection in any worship. Songs can be used to bring out Trinitarian themes. (SIAMS p 12)

Remember: worship is not a lesson. What matters is the experience of the children/participants, don't forget to encourage adults to join in. On occasion it might be appropriate to spend worship time reflecting on worship itself and finding out what the children's responses are. Any occasion can be framed with responses, music and the candle to set the right atmosphere and create worship.