

1: Collective Worship in a Church of England Primary School



How do you discover the ‘heart’ of a school? Where do you go to feel its pulse, learn about its values and catch its life? Among several possible answers surely a favourite would be “assembly” or more correctly the ‘daily act of collective worship’. It is here that a sense of community is nourished, here that shared values are expressed, here that everyone’s contributions are celebrated. In Church of England schools it is also here that God is given honour and is worshipped.

Yet the very phrase ‘daily act of collective worship’ contains a number of tricky issues for schools.

Daily. Not even in normal church congregations do people come daily to worship together. How can a daily act be kept fresh?

Collective. In school worship the whole school community is gathered. Church of England schools are not simply for Christians but exist to serve the whole community. No-one can be forced to worship, nor should they be. Church schools will contain a number of practising, worshipping families, but these may be in the minority. It has to be a collective act, not, as in a church, a corporate (‘body’ of believers) act.

Worship. Can a collection of independently minded individuals worship together in any sense of the word? Who is being worshipped? What exactly does worship mean? How should this being be worshipped? What if there are those who wish not to worship?

Even in a Church of England School, therefore, worship can be problematic. But it can also be a nourishing, inspiring and God-glorifying centre-piece of a school. We have seen it and experienced its power on many occasions. It presents a glorious possibility and can add value to a school community in many unique ways. Being part of a Church school community offers unique opportunities for pupils to encounter the Christian faith as a lived expression of faith through collective worship. We use the word ‘encounter’ carefully here, bearing in mind the right of withdrawal and the need to respect each individual’s developing spirituality, regardless of their beliefs, religious or otherwise. As articulated already, worship in a school setting is **collective** not **corporate**: a gathering of many individuals all on their own spiritual journeys. **Corporate worship** is entirely appropriate in faith communities where all would agree on the basic tenets of the faith. **Collective worship**, by contrast, allows for the presence, and it is hoped, inclusion and willing participation of members of the school community who come from faith backgrounds other than Christianity, or from no faith background at all. It offers pupils an **opportunity**: whilst collective worship is an essential core element of Church school life, it should also be a **voluntary act**. Worship is an open invitation, but it is for pupils – and staff – to use that opportunity if they feel comfortable doing so: there should be no compulsion to worship, and schools should make this clear to all who lead acts of collective worship, including visitors from outside groups*.



* There is advice from Surrey SACRE, in 2 documents: ‘Encounters with Faith’, with section 2 relating to collective worship, and ‘Time to Reflect’, p11



Each child brings to collective worship their own unique being, personality and background. The opportunities they are offered invite them to explore who God is, the world around them, and through this to understand their place in their school, their wider community and their world. They will do this in their own way, from their own perspective and at their own speed. SMSC development in this context is perhaps best viewed through the lens of **relationships**:

- of each child with themselves as they develop their sense of their uniqueness, who they are and who they are becoming;
- in the lived-out Christian values of the school through expressions of community – a community which is positive, inclusive, loving and forgiving, as Jesus was, and which models the perfect relationship at the heart of the Trinity;
- for some, with God who is love, the source of all wisdom, and the provider and sustainer of all things;
- through a growing sense of identity with their own culture, whilst also developing a capacity to welcome and celebrate the richness of the ‘other’, and appreciate the significance of faith within British culture.

Worship is about the whole person: spirituality lived out through relationships, challenges, beliefs and ideas, growing each individual’s identity within social, moral and cultural contexts: it works best when it is an embedded part of schools’ community life, the true ‘heartbeat’ of the school.

A vision for education:

In Autumn 2016, the Church of England Education Office published its 'Vision for Education' and outlined four basic elements that should be a part of church schools' educational DNA: **wisdom, hope, community** and **dignity**. Below we consider what these basic elements might look like within the context of school worship:

- **Wisdom, knowledge and skills:** For Christians, God is the source of all wisdom and creativity, also found in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ, and reflected in the working of the Holy Spirit in Christians' lives, encompassing the whole of the Trinity. In the school day, children will learn many new things and gain knowledge across the broad and balanced curriculum that their school offers. Wisdom is, in its simplest form, 'applied' knowledge – recognising that ideas need actions to accompany them, and that the acquisition of wisdom relies on knowing how to make good decisions. In order to reflect **wisdom** in school worship, here are some questions to ponder:
 - ? How do we make good choices in life? How do we learn from our mistakes?
 - ? How does our school worship help us to do this?
 - ? How do all of life's experiences, both 'WOW!' and 'OW!' (good and bad), help us to gain wisdom?
 - ? In what way do our school's Christian values help us to make wise choices in life?
 - ? Who or what do we turn to for wisdom?
 - ? What might God say about situations we face, in school and in our world? 'What would Jesus do?'
 - ? What actions might we take in response to what we have heard? Where do we 'practise' what it means to live wisely?
 - ? Are there opportunities to give further consideration / responses in classroom settings (e.g. reflective areas / prayer stations etc.)?
 - ? What wisdom is to be found in other traditions, religious or non-religious? How is this valued within our school community?
 - ? What opportunity is there to encourage and develop pupils' own creativity in worship?



- **Hope and aspiration:** 'Jesus and the love he embodies are at the heart of the Christian faith, offering hope that wrongdoing and sin, suffering, evil and death are not the last word about reality.' (*CofE Vision for Education, p.10*) A good education offers hope to all pupils, of all abilities, in helping them to unlock the potential that lies within, and realise that they are unique individuals, each with their own contribution to make, not

just to school life, but to the world that lies beyond. Reflecting **hope** in school worship might lead schools to consider:

- ? What gives us hope in life?
- ? How does collective worship help pupils to address 'real' issues, even if they're difficult, or to respond to disappointment?
- ? How does worship give pupils hope when things have not gone well for them?
- ? When things go wrong, how are relationships within our school community restored?
- ? How did Jesus give hope to people, even when they had 'sinned'?
- ? What do we consider 'success' to be in our school? Achievement, academic or other? At school, or at home? Living out school values? Team success? What's brought us joy this week?
- ? How do we celebrate success in our school community, and what message does this communicate to others who may not have done so well?
- ? How do we encourage pupils to 'pick themselves up' after failure?
- ? What relationship is there between hope and emotional resilience?
- ? What opportunities are there within school worship for pupils to express their aspirations for themselves and their world?

- **Community and living well together:** It is well-known that human beings are social ‘animals’. Jesus himself chose 12 disciples (and gathered many others) to spend his time on earth with, and there is no doubt that they learnt much from him about how to live a ‘good’ life through being in relationship with him – as much, maybe, as they did from the things he said? Their church school is, for many children, the place where they first encounter Christian community and understand how they as individuals ‘fit in’ to a different kind of family than their biological one. It is through the relationships that they build that they understand their unique value within that community, but also to God who created them. Reflecting **community** in school worship might lead you to consider:

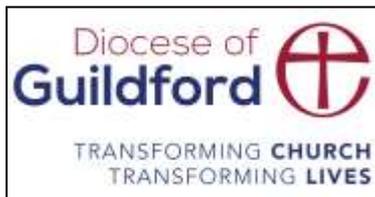


- ? What is the ‘essence’ of our school community, and how do we communicate this to pupils?
- ? What does our school worship contribute to this ‘essence’?
- ? What is the unique contribution of collective worship to the development of our school’s Christian values?
- ? How does collective worship affirm, nurture and strengthen relationships within our school community?
- ? How are relationships within our school community restored when things go wrong?
- ? Do children *and* adults in our school community value collective worship and how do we know this?
- ? How often is the whole school present for collective worship? If this is not possible, how else do we foster the sense of the whole school community?
- ? How does our school worship ‘embrace’ and include the ‘outsider’ – how do we treat visitors?
- ? Do children see connections with the local church community, both within school worship and in the wider life of our school? How well do children know our incumbent, and other members of the church?
- ? Does our school worship help pupils to see that they are part of a global Christian community e.g. through the use of prayers / art / liturgy / music / festivals etc.?
- ? How involved in worship is our link governor?



- **Dignity and respect:** at the core of Jesus’ ministry was God’s heart of love, to bring dignity and restoration to every human being, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, state of health and the accepted ‘norms’. As Paul wrote ‘you are all one in Christ Jesus’ (Galatians 3:28) How might this Christ-centred approach be seen in schools’ collective worship?

- ? How do all children know they are a valued part of collective worship, and our wider school community?
- ? Who are the more ‘vulnerable’ members of our school community, and how does school worship demonstrate to them their intrinsic worth?
- ? Does school worship favour any group of children over another in terms of approach / style? What about children for whom English is an additional language?
- ? Is school worship accessible to all, reflecting the age, needs, ability and life experiences of the gathered community? e.g. Simpler language? Pictures as well as words? BSL used in songs / prayers / for key words? How do we support children who find concentrating difficult during worship?
- ? How does school worship draw the community together around certain members in times of need (e.g. illness, trauma or bereavement)?
- ? Is our worship planned sensitively to be aware of and support the ongoing issues following bereavement and trauma e.g. on Mothers’ Day, at Christmas etc.?
- ? How do children get ‘chosen’ for ‘up-front’ roles in school worship? What about children who *never* get chosen? Think also about how children’s responses / contributions to questions asked during worship times are valued.
- ? Is there fair representation from different groups on our worship committee (if you have one)?
- ? How are pupils encouraged to treat each other with dignity and respect?



Diocese of Guildford Expectations for Collective Worship in its Church Schools

The Diocese expects collective worship to be an important aspect of Church School life: an excellent daily feature. It will be a focus for ongoing self-evaluation so as to keep quality high.

Worship should always:

- be well planned, benefitting from long term plans which have drawn on the expertise of staff, clergy and the local Christian community.
- be thoughtfully delivered in an age appropriate manner. All pupils should feel included and involved, regardless of ability, religion or culture.
- have as its central focus the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.
- be both an educational and an inspirational experience.
- underpin the Christian values of the school.
- offer opportunities for spiritual development and growth through experiences of stillness, worship and reflection.
- be participatory – inviting pupils to join in with prayer, thought, reflection and silence.

Worship will at various times in the school year give opportunity to:

- sing appropriate, songs that express worship or articulate school values and aims.
- welcome visiting speakers or participants who are well suited to the delivery of good quality school worship.
- reflect elements of an Anglican style of worship in line with the tradition in the parish.
- involve creative participation by pupils, giving them the opportunity to use their gifts to plan and lead through readings, drama, dance etc.
- experience diverse liturgical traditions which reflect the world-wide church and diversity within the UK.
- celebrate special occasions and seasons in the Church's year and the life of the nation/community.
- mark events of national and international significance
- join with parents, governors and staff who are not usually able to be present.
- It may also, at certain times, reflect the diversity of beliefs within the school, valuing the practices and traditions of others who are a part of the school community, as well as other important times of celebration for wider religious communities. There are some suggestions as to how this might be achieved within the 'broadly Christian' context in **section 5: An inclusive community.**

2: Responsibility for School Worship



Responsibility for collective worship lies with the governing body for a voluntary aided, voluntary controlled or foundation school. It will ultimately be for the governing body to ensure that the character or foundation of the school is reflected through its worship. The governing body will also be responsible for ensuring that the school is meeting its statutory obligations to hold a daily act of collective worship.

Operationally, the head teacher is responsible for carrying out these obligations, often with the help of other colleagues or a specially designated co-ordinator. Appropriate time should be allocated by the SLT for the collective worship co-ordinator to fulfil their responsibilities. This role should include:

- co-ordinating timetabling / themes across the year(s) into long, medium and short-term planning, in conjunction with the school and church community;
- ensuring that the school prospectus, welcome / induction pack & website have clear statements about the school's ethos for collective worship, (including the right of withdrawal);
- ensuring that there is a balance of regular and on-off visitors during the year, and being a point of contact for those visitors so that they understand their contribution to the worship life of the school;
- organising the evaluation of collective worship;
- being a part of the SIAMs inspection process;
- supporting other members of staff;
- knowing where to go for good resources to support worship;
- liaising with the music leader to ensure that music used as part of school worship fits the themes and school ethos, and is appropriate for use in school worship;
- leading staff meetings that have a focus on collective worship;
- in some schools, being responsible for leading school worship teams, or prayer & reflection spaces.

Governors, in particular foundation governors, should keep in touch with the style, quality and effectiveness of worship. A sample role description for a governor with responsibility for collective worship is included in **Appendix 4**.

Minor parental concerns about school worship are generally dealt with informally by the Headteacher but parents also have the right to make formal complaints to the governing body. Such complaints are heard as part of the normal complaints process by a nominated group of governors. If parents are not satisfied with the outcome they may appeal to the Diocese. Ultimately the Diocesan Bishop is the final arbiter in these matters.

Advice about the right of withdrawal can be found in **Appendix 2: Withdrawal from collective worship**.

In community schools the responsibility for collective worship lies with the headteacher in consultation with the governing body.

Governors should ensure that the school provides:

- A statement within the school prospectus which makes clear that the aims of Collective Worship within the school are based on its Christian foundation and includes parents' legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship.
- A school policy outlining the school's approach to Collective Worship (see **Appendix 8** for a suggested outline).
- Planning themes to be covered each term or year.
- Evidence of regular recording, monitoring and evaluation of school worship.

Length of Collective Worship

There is no legislation on this and professional judgment is needed. Many acts of collective worship are too long and laboured, which results in pupils becoming restless. School worship should have a recognisable start and ending, be appropriately paced but not rushed. Most good quality acts of worship are between 10-20 minutes long.

3: "A time apart"

"Come away by yourselves, and we will go to a quiet place to get some rest."

Mark 6:31

Jesus himself recognised the need for a 'time apart' from the busy-ness & pressures of the day. The contribution of school worship to the development of the whole child is not to be under-estimated. The act of worship creates a unique space for children to 'find' themselves and to realise that there is more to life than what can be easily seen or quantified.

How we handle this part of the school day sends hidden messages to children about its value and significance within your school community. As with DIY, good preparation is vital! Some of the topics dealt with here don't necessarily have 'right' answers and may just be thought-provoking - use the ideas as a stimulus for discussion and for firming-up your school's approach to worship.



Preparing for the 'time apart'

For many schools, the place where worship happens will be the same place where children have lunch, or do P.E. or have lessons, so what communicates to them the difference in feel, focus and pace when they come to worship? Maybe it's music playing, or a visual focus, or different seating arrangements.....or the presence of a visitor. Where do children start preparing for worship?As they come in? As they sit down? After they've greeted each other? Or does it take them the whole of the worship time to be properly focussed?! To give children the best advantage, have a think about...

Choosing the time

Collective worship is not part of the curriculum and should be given an appropriate, distinctive and quality time in the school day. The time of day that you hold the act of worship undoubtedly has an effect on the content, in the same kind of way that morning prayer in the Anglican service is different from evening prayer. Do you have worship at the same time every day or vary it? If your hall is used for P.E. immediately before the worship time, what implication does that have for setting things up? Do you meet as a whole school every day, or in different groupings? For 10 minutes or 20? Whatever works best for your school is the right way! Here are some thoughts....

- Having worship at the beginning of the day gives everyone that 'prime time' when they can come together at the start of a new day and focus on something beyond the busy-ness of life.
- For some pupils the transition from home into school can be challenging and they need to settle before attending worship.
- Thought needs to be given to the elements that go into an act of worship if it happens after a time when children have already been sitting in their classrooms, allowing for a shorter time and including some movement (e.g. standing to sing, doing actions in a song etc.) to aid children's concentration, or using different strategies to encourage more active participation.
- If children are coming straight in from the playground, you might need to find appropriate ways of stilling before embarking on worship.
- At the end of the day, use the opportunity to draw the struggles & triumphs of the day together.
- What about having your whole-school worship first thing on a Monday morning to set everyone on the right footing for the week, then at other times on the other weekdays?
- The presence of adults during the act of worship also speaks volumes about its centrality to the ethos of the school – who attends when is for you to decide, but try to have at least one worship time a week when everyone comes together.

Worship may also be held elsewhere than in school, e.g. in church.

Using the space

Think about how it feels for children coming into the room you use for worship. Does the environment aid or hinder reflective thought? Is it into a comfortable environment, or will their lasting memory of school worship be sitting for a long time on a hard floor? Can all the children see you? Do you have problems holding the attention of the children at the back? Do the seating arrangements always stay the same? When children aren't looking at you (it does happen!) what do they look at?

There are obvious time and resourcing constraints – it would be unreasonable to expect schools to invest in air conditioning for the summer months, or to put out chairs for every child, but thinking about the best use of the space you do have could make quite a difference.

- What do different patterns of seating e.g. arc, circle, blocks, rows, say about the sense of community, the leader, the oldest and youngest children? Is there a window, a fixed symbol, a display that it would be useful to turn and use as a focus at times?
- Where do you seat the adults? All at the back...with their own classes.....around the edges.....or even at the front!?
- Experiment with different seating arrangements to see what works best. All facing one direction? Long lines or short? In a horseshoe shape? In the round? Could it be altered for special occasions, or for a half-term, or for one day a week? Use benches as a privilege for older children, or to help the youngest children see over the heads of taller children, or as a reward for best behaviour.
- How about using the display boards in the room as a support for worship? You could set up an ongoing interactive display where children can add their thoughts, wishes, responses or requests, or that you can use as a visual stimulus to provoke worship. [The **'Prayer Spaces in Schools'** website www.prayerspacesinschools.com/ has some excellent ideas, as well as other sites listed in the resources section.]

Changing the seating arrangements may initially cause some disruption, especially if children are always used to doing it a certain way, but you might be quite surprised at how it changes the 'feel' of your worship to look at it from a different perspective!

A single class worshipping together presents different possibilities e.g. a huddle on the carpet, a re-arrangement of tables, or going outside to a favourite tree or quiet spot. In the church, in addition to the pews, consider a space where the children can see each other, or sitting on kneelers in a circle, or being close to the altar. Residentials provide unique opportunities for worship in special places e.g. outside, at a viewpoint, in a special chapel or building, around a camp-fire or maybe even at sun-rise or sunset!

Engaging all the senses

As we've said already, worship is about the whole person and not just about words: it can also be expressed through the senses, so it's worth considering ways to engage participants during collective worship. The environment in which worship is offered contributes to the atmosphere and mood and awakens different senses e.g. the school hall, a classroom, the church, outside. All these different spaces add a unique atmosphere to your worship.

With larger numbers of children, it's obviously more challenging to use certain senses e.g. taste and touch, but why not make the most of worship times with your class where it's easier to pass round a smooth pebble or a beautiful object, or share food together e.g. as part of a harvest-focused worship? Again, consult the **'Prayer Spaces in Schools'** website for some great ideas for multi-sensory prayer or reflection activities that could be adapted for school worship: some might even work on a whole-school scale.



Sight

We often think about a visual stimulus to create an atmosphere e.g. a picture, or an object, or a lit candle. Why not use a cloth or change the colour of the background of any presentation slides to convey the mood or season of the Church year, connecting children with the Anglican tradition of their parish church?

Four basic colours are used which can be reflected in cloths covering tables, backgrounds for displays, flags waved in worship – perhaps even clothing! Your local church may have additional traditions that are worth discovering.

- White Christmas and Easter (Weddings, Baptisms, Funerals, Ordinations)
- Purple Advent and Lent (Funerals)
- Red Pentecost and Saints and Martyrs
- Green Ordinary days

Here are some other visual suggestions that might add to the atmosphere:

- candles (one or many) – also think about the ritual involved with lighting / extinguishing it
- crosses – a variety of styles
- an open Bible or a simple Bible text on display
- use of multimedia if you have an interactive whiteboard in your classroom or hall
- an object linked to the worship theme

- If your school has access to banners used in your local church, then borrow them or purchase some of your own – or what about making some with children specifically for use as an inspiration for worship?
- ask children to find pictures to place alongside words from the Bible that you feature in worship, or to ‘illustrate’ the words to familiar songs? If you’re in a Primary school, older pupils could do this for younger pupils.

Sound

The music that’s played during entry / exit can help you to convey a mood and set the scene for what’s to come. Singing is also an important part of school worship – for all sorts of different reasons, not least the health benefits! *[There are some suggestions for appropriate sung worship materials in the **Resources** section.]*

But the sense of hearing might not only be engaged through music. Here are a few ideas to get you thinking. What about:

- using sound effects as part of stories that you tell? e.g. using all the noisiest instruments in school to drown out the name of Haman in the story of Esther (it’s what Jewish families do, during the festival of Purim!) You could also add vocal sound effects for certain repeated words, or create a sound contrast e.g. patting hands on laps gently, increasing to hard to make rain effects for the parable of the builders, or whispering / shouting certain phrases in a story you’re telling to make it more interactive. You could even try shouting praise, or whispering prayers (or the other way around!)
- playing a sound clip of bells ringing as a call to worship?
- featuring a sound from another religious tradition e.g. a song, or Buddhist chanting or the adhan (Muslim call to prayer) to help the pupils get more of a ‘feel’ for what a certain celebration is like?
- using a CD of sounds from nature e.g. birdsong, seascape, rain falling etc. to aid reflection?



Taste:

The Bible invites the reader to ‘Taste and see that the Lord is good.’ Now, whilst David the Psalmist who wrote these words might not have been thinking literally about his tastebuds, there is no doubt that food and eating did indeed play a large part in the life of Jesus as part of Jewish culture and tradition, and are a huge part of celebrations across many different faiths and beliefs. So why not use taste (with all allergy / health and safety protocols in place of course!) as a way in to explore an idea with children during worship e.g. ‘How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!’ (Psalm 119:103). You will, by necessity,

have to use a sample of children to demonstrate, but in a class setting, you could share more widely. In addition, there are many festivals from different traditions that have food linked with them. Here are just a few, to get you started:

- Hot cross buns and Easter eggs – Easter
- Unleavened bread – Passover
- Charoset – a mixture of chopped dried fruit & spices on the Seder plate at Passover (resembling the mortar used to make bricks during captivity in Egypt)
- Dates – traditionally used to break the fast once night has come during Ramadan (Islam)
- Apples dipped in honey – for a ‘sweet’ Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah)
- Fried potato cakes – Hanukkah (Judaism – linked to the miracle of the oil)
- Challah – sweetened, plaited bread eaten during the weekly Shabbat celebration
- Sweet treats (burfi or mithai or laddoo) – treats for the Hindu celebration of Divali
- or what about popping some corn using a popcorn maker to help children think about Harvest time, and the many different uses that we have for this humble crop?

The list could go on, but whatever you choose, don’t forget to **use** what you’re tasting to **aid worship** e.g. if you’ve shared some apples dipped in honey to mark the start of the Jewish year, then also think about the deeper idea of what it might mean to have a ‘sweet’ new year, how the actions of a community might play a part in bringing this about – and what impact this idea might have in your own school.

Touch:

Like taste, it might be difficult to access the sense of touch in a whole-school setting, as it would be too time-consuming, though not impossible, (if you talk whilst it happens) to pass a single object around the hall – and too expensive to have an object for each child to handle. You could use a sample of children, or alternatively adopt a prayer / reflective station approach within each class, or as part of a display at the front of the hall for children to interact with



during the week ahead. The **'Prayer Spaces in Schools'** website will yield many ideas. Some things that you could try en masse are:

- actions as part of interactive stories
- actions that children have invented for familiar songs
- Makaton signing to songs, or as part of stories
- prayers that have accompanying actions or signs



Smell

Smell is a very evocative sense. Think about how the smell of roast dinner might take you right back in your imagination to Granny's kitchen for Sunday lunch....or how an unpleasant smell can put you right off eating!

Incense is used widely in worship across different religions, so why not have a perfumed candle lit at the start of school worship? At the very least it might disguise the post-lunch smells, or sweaty feet PE smell, but wouldn't it be wonderful in years to come if your children, now grown up, got a whiff of fragrance that reminded them of the special times of worship they shared at school?

However and whenever you choose to do your school worship, it's like any other part of the curriculum – the more thought and preparation you put into your acts of worship, the more likely you'll be to get the results you hope for, and that it will become that essential 'core' of your school's life together.

4: Crafting collective worship



As with everything else in school, good planning is all part of the worship experience for pupils. What happens in worship should never become predictable, but pupils will benefit from a sense of familiarity with the structure of their collective worship, in the hope that their experience of worship will deepen over time. In this section we explore some key steps to creating successful school worship, and some guidance for planning the process.

Six steps to creating a successful assembly

Step 1: Think of a theme

What is the point you want to make? This is your focus and you need to be very clear about it. Fix it in your planning with a single sentence. It may be a practical issue like 'We don't waste paper' or, alternatively, it may involve a complicated moral issue like bullying. If you need to examine such a complex issue, then you must choose a single, specific aspect of the issue and concentrate on that.

Step 2: Keep it simple

This is probably the most important 'golden rule'. When you have your idea, try to plan your assembly so that you are focussing on one part of the subject at a time, otherwise children will become confused and learn very little. Simplicity is especially important for younger pupils.



Step 3: Ensure understanding

Check that the children share your understanding of the key words in your theme. It is probable that one word will be pivotal in any assembly so it is vital that everyone has a common understanding of what you mean by it. It would, for instance, be futile to hold an assembly about co-operation if some of your children think that you are talking about the local co-op shop! You need to explain, clarify and demonstrate the meaning of your key words throughout the assembly if the value they represent is to be understood and practised by all the children in the school.

Step 4: Illustrate your point

Jesus used parables to explain abstract moral values and you need to do something similar for children by converting your focus into something concrete and visual. You need to show, as well as tell. It can seem difficult to dream up a suitable visual metaphor but it is well worth the effort because it turns your assembly into a memorable dramatic event that is a useful reference point for the children as they struggle to understand complex moral issues.

Step 5: Use familiar props

You are making a point and you are making it in a visual way but you don't want the props to be too distracting. If the children are trying to work out what the props are, they won't be listening to the point that you are making. This is actually to your benefit because it means that you only need to use everyday things. It's the way you utilise objects from home, or school equipment, that will make all the difference.



Step 6: Reinforce the theme

Having shown, clarified and explained your point during the assembly, you need to end by repeating this very clearly. This can often be done as a prayer or moment of reflection. The message that the children take back to class should be the same simple sentence that began your planning. Repeating the key message in class reflection areas creates the possibility for children to keep engaging with the theme in the days that follow.

Any act of worship is a kind of journey. You cannot assume that everyone travels at the same pace and at the same time, so there should be opportunity to start and restart as you go along. If the journey is a kind of staircase, from what is known to what will be gradually disclosed, there should be overlap between the steps to allow people who have not hung on every word to begin again and join in afresh.

Tim Elbourne – How to craft collective worship (Grove Books)





There is no doubt that variety is the spice of life, and this is also true of worship as well. A successful act of worship is like a cake mixture – made up of a range of ingredients, and the magic only happens when we mix them all together! We are made as creative beings, in the image of a Creative God, and we are all designed to respond to different stimuli. Employing a wide range of strategies and including a variety of elements will ensure that pupils remain motivated.

Many schools use the **Gather – Engage – Respond – Send** model for planning school worship. Some key points to include in each section are explored below. There are also further examples of acts of worship in this format in

Appendix 5.

Theme: <i>one or two words</i>	Group of Pupils: <i>ages/ year groups / number</i>
Length: <i>allow time to get in at the beginning</i>	
Aim(s): <i>This should only be one simple phrase.</i>	
Resources needed: <i>A list of what you need to gather and take in with you</i>	
Content of worship:	
<p>Gathering <i>A short opening sentence or response.</i> <i>What will help to signal the start of this special time? Lighting a candle? Playing some music?</i> <i>Do you use a set opening response? e.g. ‘Peace be with you.’ – ‘And also with you.’</i></p> <p>Engaging <i>something that the pupils will relate to and will catch their interest.</i> <i>What will you use to create the ‘sacred space’ and engage pupils with your chosen theme?</i> <i>A picture, video, object, game, drama, story?</i> <i>The Biblical content (story or verse) How will you tell the story?</i> <i>The way that the Biblical content is linked back to the pupils’ own lives.</i> <i>If you’re using a story or festival from other religions or cultures, how will this connect with your school’s Christian values? (see section 5: Being an inclusive community)</i> <i>Don’t forget that adults are a part of your community, so occasionally involve them too!</i></p> <p>Responding (Reflection/Prayer) <i>This section ensures that the legal requirements for collective worship are met. This could be reflection while a picture is displayed, music played, or a candle burns.</i> <i>Or it could be a prayer, read, extemporary, interactive. Always phrase this section so that it is clear that prayer is an invitation, not a command. (See section 1: Collective worship in a Church of England school for further guidance)</i> <i>You might also decide to offer both reflection and prayer, which ensures that all pupils should be able to respond in a way that is comfortable for them!</i></p> <p>Sending <i>How will you close the worship?</i> <i>A response, a challenge, a thought, picture Bible verse, question on the screen?</i> <i>Do you have a set closing response?</i> <i>What ‘message’ will pupils take back to class with them? How can you encourage them to re-connect with the theme in their classrooms or other worship during the week?</i></p>	
Music used on entry / exit <i>This will set the mood</i>	
Music sung: <i>What will the pupils sing? Bear in mind that if your aim is for an inclusive assembly, some words might be more difficult for certain children to sing. You may wish to use the same kind of invitational language that is used to frame prayer in collective worship.</i>	

5: Being an inclusive community

“Warm fires and open doors”

“Warm Fires... a vibrant and attractive sense of our Christian identity, and Open Doors... a real welcome to anyone and everyone to gather round the fire.”
David Thomson, Bishop of Huntingdon (whole quote at end)



From the earliest years of their existence, Church of England Schools have served their local children. Today this is still the case. Whilst a proportion of school places may be reserved for those who seek a distinctively Christian education, the majority of places are for local children regardless of religious affiliation. It is therefore a particular privilege of Church of England Schools that we are able to offer places to children from religions other than Christianity, from diverse cultures and lifestyles, and from many nations.

“Church of England schools are not faith schools for the faithful, they are Church schools for the community.” *Rev. Nigel Genders*

Our example here is Jesus Christ who welcomed all, regardless of colour or creed and who pointed us all to the highest aspirations. His eye was always on the outsider, drawing them into wholeness and community. Many families of

other faiths value Church school education because spiritual life is taken seriously, God is honoured, prayer is important and values are closely mirrored.

Living as global citizens

Whilst it may not have been its intended purpose, the British Values agenda has done much that is positive in schools in raising awareness of both our national identity, and our place in the world. For many in Britain, we are both ‘British’ and culturally diverse, and increasingly as a nation, we are, more than ever, a microcosm of our global community. For many people of faith, this is not a new concept, as being a Christian, or a Muslim, or a Buddhist (etc.) has increasingly meant being connected to a community that is larger than any one nation.



Whilst worship should most definitely be centred on children’s spiritual development, we perhaps more than ever before need our children to understand the expressions of diversity both within their own school community, and the global community of which we are all a part. Like Christianity, other major religions represented in Great Britain also have a cycle of festivals that are celebrated on a yearly basis. Included within this section are some suggestions for festivals that could be used as a stimulus during worship – this is obviously not an exhaustive list, to save on space, and it is not intended that you should include all events, or even any of them! Rather use this section as a source to dip into when you fancy, or to recognise the beliefs of those children represented within your school, or simply to raise awareness of wider global issues.

It is important to remember that as Church schools, the worship should always be Christian in context, so the focus for children should help them to see the parallels that exist between Christianity and the beliefs and practices of other world faiths. This means that it is not appropriate to hold worship in school that belongs in another faith tradition. However, either as a separate activity, or incorporated into worship, information and affirmation can be given. of others’ beliefs. Alternatively, story material from other faiths and beliefs may at times be used in Christian worship when the material shares the same values as Christianity. The following excerpt from a CEM publication might help to understand how this is possible, without compromising individuals’ beliefs:

“Before you finish breakfast this morning, you’ve depended on half the world.”
Martin Luther King

" • *Issues of ecology, pollution, the stewardship of the earth's resources etc. are Christian concerns which arise from the doctrine of creation.*

• *Human capacity for prejudice, cruelty, war and alienation are Christian issues arising from the belief that the world is fallen.*

• *That all people are valued despite handicap, age, race or gender is implicit in the doctrine of incarnation. [i.e. that Jesus came to earth to save all people regardless of their status]*

• *Belief in the kingdom of God, where justice, peace and harmony are to be established, means that young people's yearnings for causes and impatience with unfairness are implicitly Christian.*

Worship which raises these issues will be Christian and yet need not alienate non-Christians."

(Derek Jay, Viewpoint, Assembly File no.14 CEM)



Whilst all worship in Church of England Schools will be in a Christian context, the following points should be considered in planning worship with children of other faiths and beliefs in mind:

- Include and involve children of other faiths and beliefs in all aspects of collective worship.
- Be aware that some children will be sensitive about talking about their customs and beliefs. This is balanced by many others who love to! All views should be respected, and no child coerced.
- Listen to the voice of children, particularly from minority groups, to gauge interest and involvements.
- Be sensitive to children's needs when briefing visitors who might be involved in leading worship. (see *Section 5a. 'Visitors'* for more information and guidance on welcoming and briefing visitors to worship in your school.)
- Give children time for personal reflection before embarking on a prayer. This allows each individual to respond to the worship focus in a way that is appropriate for them
- Use invitational language e.g. "you may like to join me in this prayer / song...". Prayer, and indeed worship, for any individual should be voluntary, not demanded.
- It may be appropriate to include some prayers from other cultures.
- Refer to the major festivals of other faiths within the school year, relating important concepts where appropriate to Christian faith e.g. fasting, pilgrimage, prayer, service.
- Draw on the stories, heroes, customs and values of other religions and beliefs – again, relating these, where appropriate, to parallels in Christianity.
- Recognise that some families in your school would consider themselves to be 'non-religious', so acknowledge this as appropriate when you speak and ensure that no child feels ostracised on account of their beliefs.
- From a school perspective, it makes it very much easier to successfully enact a withdrawal, should it be required, if the elements of an assembly e.g. notices, sharing information, celebrating successes etc. are distinct from the elements that constitute the act of worship. Such a distinction enables 'withdrawn' children to still be a part of the school community, yet still be easily removed from worship at the point that it actually becomes worship.

For schools who have pupils of faiths or beliefs other than Christianity, it is particularly important that acknowledgement is given of the significant times and festivals which matter to them. There may also be occasions when visitors from other faiths are available to visit the school. Both of these situations are to be welcomed. Visits to places of worship of other faiths as part of the R.E. programme are to be welcomed, but it is important to make clear both to pupils and their parents that there will be no requirement for pupils to **engage** in worship whilst they are there. They may however be present to **observe** worship taking place and should learn the difference between participation and observation.

The dates for many festivals change from year to year as they are based on the lunar calendar, so dates have not been included unless the festival is fixed. As a starting point, we have included festivals from the faiths that schools within the Diocese are likely to be studying in R.E. – i.e. from Judaism, Islam & Hinduism, but there are also other 'favourites' listed such as Chinese New Year. For a more comprehensive list, try

using the Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals, which can be purchased online from www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/ The BBC also have a good multi-faith calendar at www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar. Oxfam have some fantastic resources (and some great quotes!) for learning about being a global citizen, so do visit their website: www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/global-citizenship-in-the-classroom-a-guide

Below is some general advice in regard to including elements from other faiths and beliefs in Church school collective worship, but there are also some sample acts of collective worship using material from faiths other than Christianity in **Appendix 5**.

Buddhist Festivals:



Festival / event	General information / suggested focus
Bodhi Day	Celebrates the day when Buddha first encountered enlightenment, under the Bodhi tree, and vowed to find the cause of all the suffering in the world. Focus on: how do we 'get' enlightened? What did Jesus say about suffering?
Nirvana Day	Marks the day when Buddha, aged 80, attained the state of enlightenment and passed into Nirvana, the end of the cycle of death and rebirth, and of all suffering and want. Focus on: your desires for a perfect world – what would it look like? How could we achieve an end to want and greed? What promises are there in the Bible for a 'perfect', restored world?
Wesak / Vesak	The Buddha's birthday. On this day, Buddha statues may be given a 'bath' and offerings brought, showing respect and gratitude. Focus on: celebrating birthdays – celebrating the person who is the focus of that birthday. How can we respect and show we are grateful to others in our community (maybe more than just on their birthday!)? Why is it so important to 'celebrate' and value individuals?

***Watchpoints:** Meditation is an accepted practice in Buddhism, but it is not recommended that it be used within the context of collective worship. Whilst it might be appropriate for pupils to observe Buddhist meditation at a temple, or in a video clip as part of RE (where the line between observation and participation is clearly defined), within worship it would be confusing for children, and potentially get muddled with their more 'normal' practice of reflection (which is **not** the same as meditation!)*

Hindu Festivals:



Festival / event	General information / suggested focus
Makar Sankrant	Hindu New Year. Kites are flown and it's customary for people to try to 'cut' as many kites out of the sky using their own kite. Focus on: How we mark the turn of the year. How do we 'turn over a new leaf'?
Holi	The Hindu Spring festival. It's very messy, as one of the customs is to throw coloured paint or paint powder at each other! Focus on: How we welcome the spring, a fresh start. What's wonderful about creation during spring?
Raksha Bandhan	A celebration of brotherhood and love. Sisters tie woven bracelets around their brothers' wrists to show love and as a sign of his protection of her. Focus on: How we show friendship / commitment to each other
Diwali	Hinduism and Sikhism share this festival. Commemorates the story of Rama and Sita – the victory of good over evil, light over darkness. Candles are a big feature of this festival. Focus on: Good winning over evil

Jewish Festivals:



Festival / event	General information / suggested focus
Purim	Commemorates the story of Esther. Focus on: how God looks after people who follow him faithfully, even in hard times
Passover	Commemorates the story of the plagues during the Exodus, especially the tenth. Lasts for 7 or 8 days Focus on: how God looks after people who follow him

Rosh Hashanah	Jewish New Year – commemorates the creation of the world Focus on: reflecting back over our past deeds, and thinking about how we would want to behave in the future
Yom Kippur	Jewish Day of Atonement – often a day of fasting Focus on: things we need to say sorry (repent) for – and how this is an important part of being forgiven
Sukkot	Jewish harvest festival. Commemorates the time that the Israelites lived in shelters (sukkahs) during the 40 years in the desert. Focus on: how God provides for our needs
Hanukkah	Winter festival of lights. Commemorates the miracle of the oil in the temple. Focus on: anything miraculous! e.g. ‘what’s the most amazing thing you’ve ever seen happen?’, or one of Jesus’ miracles

Watchpoints: whilst the Christian faith shares many stories with Judaism, it should be remembered that Jewish people do not call their scriptures the ‘Old Testament’. The Jewish scriptures are called the Tenakh (Torah – instruction [books of the law]; Nevi’im – Prophets; and Ketuvim – writings [Job, Psalms, Ruth, ‘history’ books etc.]) Within the Jewish community, there will be those who hold to the **traditions** of Judaism, and celebrate within this context as a way of keeping the past alive, and others who would consider themselves to be **religious** Jews.



Muslim Festivals:

Festival / event	General information / suggested focus
Al-Hijira	Muslim New Year. Commemorates the move of Muhammad (pbuh*) and his followers from Mecca to Medina and set up the first Islamic state Focus on: New beginnings
Ramadan	A month of fasting (for adults) during daylight hours. Commemorates the first month of the revelation of the Qur’an to Muhammad (pbuh*) Focus on: the concept of self-control. Why is this one of the ‘fruits of the spirit’?
Id-ul-Fitr	Immediately follows Ramadan. Starts at the first sighting of the new moon & celebrates the end of fasting with feasting! Focus on: ways that God has helped us to ‘keep on going’ & how this sometimes makes us feel like celebrating
Hajj (start of)	Hajj is the ‘at least once in a lifetime’ pilgrimage to Mecca, and is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Mecca is the birthplace of Muhammad (pbuh*) Focus on: the most special journeys we’ve made; the concept of pilgrimage
Id-ul-Adha	Commemorates the sacrifice of Ibrahim in being prepared to give up his son Isma’il (not Isaac, as in the Judeo-Christian story) Focus on: the concept of sacrifice e.g. ‘what’s the most valuable thing you’ve ever given up for someone else?’

Watchpoints: * as a sign of respect, Muslims will often say ‘Peace be upon him’ (pbuh) after pronouncing the name of the Prophet Muhammad, or any of the other prophets of Islam, which include Musa (Moses), Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isa (Jesus). The leader of the collective worship will have to decide for themselves whether they **model** this practice during worship to children out of respect for any Muslim children in your school community. There are many stories from the Qur’an that are shared by Jews and Christians too, but do ensure that you use a good retelling of Qur’anic stories for children in this context, as there are sometimes some subtle differences.



Sikh Festivals:

Festival / event	General information / suggested focus
Vaisaki	Marks the beginning of Sikhism and the founding of the brotherhood / sisterhood of the Khalsa, to which all baptised Sikhs belong. Equality for all is a significant concept within Sikhism, expressed through the Khalsa and practical service at the gurdwara. The making and eating of karah prashad symbolises this equality. Focus on: the importance of equality – how can we treat others as equals? How do we make sure that school life is fair for everyone? What would be your ‘recipe’ for equality in life?
Gurpurabs	These are akin to Christian saints’ days. There is one for each of the ten gurus of Sikhism, marking their birth or death. The most notable of these is Guru Nanak Ji**’s birthday , as he was the founder of the Sikh faith. On this day, the Guru Granth Sahib Ji (the Sikh holy scriptures, the last ‘guru’ in

	Sikhism) are read aloud from beginning to end. Focus on: the importance of remembering special days, and honouring special people in our own lives. 'Guru' means 'teacher'. What can we do today to 'honour' our teachers?
Diwali	Hinduism and Sikhism share this festival. Commemorates the story of Rama and Sita – the victory of good over evil, light over darkness. Candles are a big feature of this festival. Focus on: Good winning over evil

Watchpoints: * as a sign of respect, Sikhs will often use the title 'Ji' after a guru's name, in a similar way to how Muslims honour the prophets of Islam.

Other Festivals / Events:



Festival / event	General information / suggested focus
Chinese New Year	Dragon dances, lucky money, new clothes – this is a real time of celebration for Chinese communities. It's traditionally also the start of the new financial year and a time for generosity. One of the stories connected with the animals after which the year is named (Rooster etc.) involves how Buddha invited his animal friends to celebrate his birthday Focus on: generosity – and how important it is to have a heart that is generous.
Martin Luther King Day (January 15 th)	Famous for the 'I have a dream' speech. Focus on: what children would like the future to hold – for them, for their world? What 'dreams' of this sort do they have for their world? What sort of a place might God like it to be?
World Book Day (usually early March)	A celebration of books of all sorts..... Focus on: the value that books and reading bring to our lives, precious books; why the Bible is still a best-seller
Red Nose Day (usually 2 nd week in March)	Raising funds for disadvantaged communities in our world. Focus on: the value of each individual as a creation 'made in God's image'. Issues of poverty, sharing and charity could also be explored.
One World Week (October)	'When we understand each other's perspectives, our lives can be transformed and enriched' is the vision – (and it fits in nicely with the British Values agenda!) Focus on: the diversity of people across the world, what it means to be part of One World e.g. sharing resources; Jesus' words in Matthew 25: 44-45
Harvest celebrations	The harvest is celebrated in many different ways across our world, from tomato battles celebrating harvest in Colombia, to Ghanaian yam festivals. Referring to global expressions of thanksgiving at Harvest in Christian communities around the world is also enriching for children. Focus on: why so many different communities celebrate the Harvest; on why it's important to be thankful; how we are reliant on our planet's resources for food.... and many more!
International Children's Day (October / November)	Based on the UN's Rights of the Child convention. Focus on: Why children are important, how Jesus viewed children
Birthdays or deaths of notable (or even relatively unknown) people from history – or dates of scientific discovery	The Google search box often reveals on a daily basis an interesting person's birthday or day that they died. Why not check it regularly and use the inspiration of someone who's had an impact on our world? In this way, you could also include the influence of lives of non-religious people within the school year e.g. 'Darwin Day' on 12 th February celebrates the birthday of Charles Darwin. Don't forget anniversaries of deaths e.g. as well as April 23 rd being St. George's Day, marking his death, it also happens to be the date that William Shakespeare's death is remembered. Focus on: the contribution that the individual made to our world e.g. Fleming's discovery of penicillin on September 28 th ; the amazing creativity and curiosity present in human beings; values that individuals exhibited in their lifetimes; fostering these qualities in your own school community

“Warm fires and open doors” explained.... in Bishop David Thomson’s own words

We would be worse off if either we lost the clarity and warmth of the fire at the centre, or started to close the door on some because they were not already committed to it enough. We need to combine good strong roots, a robust sense of church and school alike as Christian or “in Christ” with a very open door, always inviting but never forcing, leaving room for questioning, doubt, disagreement, journeying and just looking. Lose either pole and it all goes wrong. Get it right and what might look like weaknesses are in fact strengths.

Supportive but not explicitly Christian staff, students of many faiths and none, worship where some are committed but others “just looking” are all exactly where we would expect to be. And in fact they represent a powerful model of mission, in which the good news and the good things of God are lived out and celebrated in all sorts of places, and then the celebrants work their way back, as it were, to the great celebration, the big roof under which we all gather, wherever we started from and wherever we’ve reached on our journey. From that unity, as it re-discovers and affirms its common life and foundation and faith, new energy flows out back into highways and byways of the world, reaching even further than before, only once again to return.

David Thomson, Bishop of Huntingdon, speaking to school leaders in 2014



6: Welcoming visitors

The participation of visitors to lead worship enriches the experience of the whole school. Collective worship provides a unique opportunity for schools to extend a hand of welcome to visitors and it is to be hoped that they would receive appropriate hospitality within the school, both before and after the worship time. Similarly it is important properly to introduce a visitor to the gathering and to arrange an expression of thanks, perhaps given by a pupil. Even regular visitors need to be given a warm welcome and thanks for their contribution.

Regular visitors are likely to include the incumbent, a parish children or families' worker, Pastoral Assistants and other linked parish staff. Less frequent regular visitors might include the head of a linked school, a representative of the school's particular charity or an "assemblies team". More frequent or regular visitors from the parish (e.g. OTB teams) will generally need to work to the school's long term plans for worship. Consequently it may be helpful to include them on the planning team wherever possible.

There will also be occasional "one-off" visits from a variety of settings for example a different charity, someone returning from a special assignment in another part of the world, a representative from a campaigning group such as 'healthy eating'. Sometimes schools can be inundated with requests for visiting speakers and it will be necessary to be carefully selective. It is also essential that schools take into account any guidance issued by Ofsted or other appropriate bodies in regard to the safeguarding of pupils.

Some visiting groups will have a significant message or presentation that may not constitute an act of worship. The school leader will need to plan a brief act of worship, usually taking place after the presentation, to place the material in an appropriate context of prayer, worship or reflection. An act of worship, however brief, should not be 'simply tagged on' or 'dragged in' to augment a presentation, or undertaken in a way that communicates unhelpfully to the visiting speaker that they have not 'done it right'. Ideally the need for anything additional should be discussed with the visiting leader during the time of planning *before* the visit takes place, highlighting the importance of good preparation. It is essential that visiting speakers receive a copy of the school policy on collective worship before their visit, and highly recommended that visitors meet with key members of staff before leading an act of worship, to establish school protocols.



The school needs to be satisfied that any visitor to school worship is fully aware of what is and is not appropriate. It should be stressed that the purpose of the visit is for the school community to learn from the richness of other perspectives, and not an opportunity for proselytising or evangelising of any sort. All visitors should be fully briefed beforehand about the school and the particular group of children that will be addressed. The Surrey SACRE guidance document '**Encounters with Faith – visits and visitors as part of RE & Collective Worship in Surrey schools**' contains guidance, codes of conduct and checklists to help schools when welcoming visitors in this context, and there is also advice in their guidance '**Time to Reflect**'. **These documents can be found linked from the Diocesan website.** All visitors to church schools should also be encouraged to think about the statements in the code of conduct, which

Members of belief communities taking part in the life of the school, including visits to places of worship, should:

- be willing to share their own experiences, beliefs and insights, but avoid:
 - i. criticising the experience and insights of others and
 - ii. imposing their views on pupils in any way
- be familiar with the school's aims, ethos and policies and plan their involvement in the light of the aims and curriculum at the school;
- seek to use engaging teaching and learning methods that involve the pupils actively, and to communicate at appropriate levels for the age group(s) concerned;
- be willing to respect and value the beliefs of any pupils and adults in the school when they are different from their own;
- develop ways of speaking to pupils that communicate their open approach, avoiding any hidden agenda to 'convert' or proselytise.

***A key question to help visitors reflect on their approach – the 'golden rule' of the conduct:
'If a member of another religion or belief visited my child's school and contributed in the same way that I have done, would I, as a parent, be happy with the education given?'***

recommends that:

Visitors should be briefed on:

- expected time, length
- the involvement of children
- appropriate age-pitch
- the involvement of staff
- issues of inclusion (see **Appendix 2: Withdrawal from collective worship**)
- the space available
- any relevant pupil information e.g. religious or cultural diversity, which might require a change of wording or approach
- normal routines (including who's responsible for any behaviour management during the time)
- any relevant topical information in the school
- where this visit fits into recent pattern of worship themes
- the school's styles with regard to acts of worship
- audio-visual equipment available

The school should be briefed by the visitor on:

- content of the presentation
- audio-visual requirements
- requests for particular prayers / song (or other input from school staff)
- in the case of charities, agreement on the nature of participation that is requested (expectations) or not acceptable.



Be ready with hospitality when it's needed. Why, some have extended a welcome to angels without ever knowing it!

Hebrews 13:2

7: Staff attendance at collective worship

Collective worship is intended for the whole school community. Although the legal requirement for daily worship applies to the pupils, the greatest benefit is gained when worship takes such a high priority in the life of the school that everyone, all adults and pupils, is present. Who attends when is for the headteacher to decide, but the diocese recommend that school have a minimum of one worship time a week when everyone comes together.

There has been a tendency, especially in primary schools, to give teachers non-contact time during collective worship. Although this is understandable, it undermines the important aspect of collective worship as being a celebration of the whole school community. Pupils quickly realise when key adults are not present and begin to wonder whether collective worship is an important part of the school day.

Practically, it will rarely be possible for everyone to be together, but extra effort might be made for special occasions. The message this conveys to pupils is significant: we are community who work and worship together. On such occasions it is beneficial to be joined by members of the wider staff such as the office team, not only the classroom staff.

It is good practice for a minimum of two adults to be present in an act of worship involving several classes: one to lead and the other to support.

The involvement and example of class teachers and support staff play an important part in the developing attitude of their pupils. Whilst their role may well include keeping a watchful eye on the group, their intention to be involved in the worship with their pupils should be clear.

Class teachers will also expect to organise occasions when their class leads worship for the whole school, and to be asked to lead worship themselves; this may be for their class, year group, phase or whole school.

The Church of England Expectations of Staff Attendance at Collective Worship.

The Church of England document 'Attendance at Acts of Collective Worship in Church of England Schools' (2011) recommends that *'All members of the school staff should be encouraged to attend acts of collective worship and as far as is practicable school staff structures and timetables should enable the maximum number to do so.'*

The Church of England model contracts of Employment (July 2017) include the following:

Teachers in Voluntary Aided schools will:

- be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of the School;
- have regard to, maintain and develop the Church of England character of the School;
- not do anything which is in any way detrimental, prejudicial, or contrary to the interests of the School and/or its Foundation;
- give and/or supervise the giving of religious education in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of England and the requirements of the Trust Deed of the School;
- take part in, and may be required to lead, acts of religious worship.

Support staff in Voluntary Aided schools will:

- be conscientious and loyal to the aims and objectives of the School;
- have regard to, maintain and develop the Church of England character of the School; and
- not do anything which is in any way detrimental, prejudicial, or contrary to the interests of the School and/or its Foundation.

There is an infrequently-used guidance contract that relates to 'reserved teachers' in **Voluntary Controlled schools**, which states that they may appoint up to 20% of the staff (including the headteacher) as Reserved Teachers. In VC schools only Headteachers and Reserved Teachers have a contractual responsibility to lead and take part in acts of worship. For advice about staff withdrawal from collective worship, including 'reserve teachers' please refer to the **Appendix 2 – Withdrawal from collective worship.**

8: Resources for collective worship

Whilst this is by no means an exhaustive list of materials that you might find useful, these websites and suggestions are a good place to start, listed alphabetically!



Assemblies.org

Collective worship for many occasions for primary and secondary. It's very popular with teachers so best to check that someone else hasn't used that idea in your school before.

<http://www.assemblies.org.uk/>

Barnabas in Schools

Ideas for collective worship, mainly through drama and story-telling. Use the search bar to find what you need. It can be worth looking at the Barnabas in Churches website for ideas to adapt.

www.barnabasinschools.org.uk

Brick Testament Lego Bible

Lots of Bible stories told using Lego. Note some school firewalls prevent access to this site – and it's also advisable to check the content before you use it, as some stories are quite graphic!

www.thebricktestament.com/home.html

BBC Faith photographs

Some interesting photographs on the theme of faith www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-30081784

BBC Radio Collective worship

Something to think about age 4-7 and Together age 7-11

With teacher notes (written by our own Rachel Boxer!)

[BBC - School Radio - Collective Worship: primary teaching resources KS1, KS2 for assemblies](#)

BBC Assemblies

A collection of video and audio clips suitable for KS1 and KS2 Collective Worship

[BBC - Assemblies](#)

Damaris

Resources using film, both primary and secondary

[Assemblies Online: Bible-based school assemblies using film clips from latest movies and relevant contemporary culture](#)

Ely Diocese

Weekly act of worship for primary schools based on the Church of England lectionary readings

[Acts of Worship – The Diocese of Ely Education Directorate](#)

Flame Children's Ministries

Ideas for reflective prayer areas. Use the search facility which is very good.

www.flamecreativekids.blogspot.co.uk

Free Bible Images

Pictures in both drawn and photographic form to go with most Bible stories.

<http://www.freebibleimages.org/>

Image bank

Photographs and graphics with Christian themes for free download

www.imagebank.org.uk

REEBOO

Online assemblies for use in a class or tutor group (Secondary) currently £299 a year

www.rebooworld.com

Primareboo

Online assemblies for use in a classroom (Primary) £299 a year

www.primareboo.co.uk

Teacher's Dozen

Includes the Playmobil Bible stories (known as the Brompton Bible stories), various puppet videos and animations. There is a small charge to download.

The Teacher's Dozen Assembly Resources are on a 4 year programme with accompanying ppts. They are very popular in many of our primary schools.

[School Resources: Teacher's Dozen](#)

Worship Cloud

Pictures, poems, readings mainly for older pupils. Once you register you have a small weekly allowance of downloads for free. You can also purchase individual items at a small cost.

www.theworshipcloud.com

Worship Workshop

A Church of England resource to help you build a collective worship. Ideas for liturgy as well as music and words for hymns

www.worshipworkshop.org.uk

9: School Self-Evaluation of Collective Worship

It is good practice for schools to evaluate the **impact** of their collective worship. This enables the school leadership to continually improve the collective worship and will provide information and evidence when the school has its section 48 inspection.

There are a variety of ways that this self-evaluation may be carried out but it is important that all members of the school community are involved, not only the adults.

Some possible ways of evaluating the impact of worship:

- **Governors or staff observation of collective worship.**

Tip - use a proforma so that governors or staff evaluate similar elements of the worship. Make sure it includes pupil's responses to the worship. **See Appendix 6 for an example.**

- **Pupil focus groups.** Ask a group of no more than 4 pupils for their views on collective worship. This could be led by an adult such as a governor, volunteer or members of staff, or an older pupil.

Tip – make sure that an adult asking the questions is not someone who usually leads worship.

Tip – use the same questions with each groups so that you can see if themes are developing.

- **School council or worship team feedback.** Ask the school council for feedback on the impact of collective worship.

Tip – To widen the pool of responses, give the councillors a set of questions to discuss with their class and then feedback to the whole council.

- **Ask each pupil for their answer to a question about worship responses.**

Tip – in one school pupils wrote or drew their answers onto acetate in the hall.

- **Include a question about collective worship in your annual parent / carer survey.**

Tip – make sure you feedback to parents on your findings.



- **Ask pupils for their responses to a big question following a collective worship.**

Tip – one school put a question and photo on an easel with hooks around for pupils to clip on their responses. These are then picked up in collective worship later in the week.

- **Set aside some staff meeting time once a term to discuss the impact of worship.**

Tip - have a simple structure for the discussion e.g. WWW (what went well), EBI (even better if).

**From 'Ideas For Evaluating Collective Worship', May 2012, published by
Portsmouth and Winchester Diocesan Board of Education**



Four simple questions to ask pupils - they really do work.

1. Tell me one thing you liked about the collective worship you have just been in
 - a. *This is a personal idea, just about your feelings or thoughts.*
2. Tell me one thing that would have made it better for you
 - a. *This is a personal idea, just about your feelings or thoughts.*
3. Tell me what it was about
 - a. *This is about factual recall.*
4. Tell me why the person leading the worship did what they did (NB How you phrase this depends on the age of the pupils)
 - a. So what was the point?
 - b. What do you take away?
 - c. What do we learn about how we live our lives?

Another set of questions to ask pupils:

1. Tell us how worship makes you feel
2. Tell us about a worship you have really enjoyed
3. Tell us how you would like to improve worship

Further thoughts about evaluating worship

If the only purpose of evaluation is to provide an audit trail for inspection then the rationale is flawed – if it is to improve practice, then here are some thoughts other than a daily record that could be more effective.

- Invite another adult (Vicar, governor, learning support, parent) to talk to pupils of all ages about how collective worship feels for them. Record the outcome of these conversations and review them with staff who lead collective worship, leadership team, the vicar or governors.
- Set aside 15 minutes of a staff meeting once a term to review how staff feel about collective worship. Record the outcome of these discussions and review them with staff who lead collective worship, leadership team, the vicar or governors.
- Add a question on the parent and or the pupil questionnaires about perceptions of collective worship.
- Invite the vicar or diocesan officer to observe a collective worship and spend quality time afterwards to discuss the various aspects of the worship.
- Invite a diocesan officer to review the overall planning of worship.
- Video a collective worship and watch and reflect on it yourself. You could place the camera on the floor pointing upwards so it captures a child's eye view.

Pupils wrote and drew what they valued about collective worship on acetate sheet to create a stained glass window style display



10: Collective Worship as part of a Section 48 Inspection

Guidance based on the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools SIAMS Framework 2018

Alongside a school Ofsted inspection, schools of a religious character are charged, under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005, to undergo a denominational inspection. For Church of England Schools this is called the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools, or SIAMS. An important aspect of a SIAMS inspection is the evaluation of the impact of collective worship in the school.

The principal objective of the SIAMS inspection is to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school. The 2018 SIAMS framework is closely linked to the Church of England Vision for Education, (Autumn 2016). The inspector will grade the school on the question; *How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?*

This will be explored through seven strands one of which is collective worship.

As with a Section 5 Ofsted inspection, SIAMS is concerned with verifying or challenging the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. The SIAMS framework document and model self-evaluation document include useful questions and grade descriptors to help the school self-evaluate the impact of their collective worship on the school community.

The inspector will be looking for evidence of the ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.

In developing collective worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring the school community needs to evaluate the extent to which worship:

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- b) Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- c) Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- d) Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship

SIAMS Judgements

Each aspect of the inspection is judged according to a 3 point scale

1 Excellent

2 Good

3 Requires Improvement

In the SIAMS report a paragraph is devoted to Collective Worship. This contains a succinct evaluation. The inspection will also report to the National Society and Diocese whether or not the school is complying with its statutory obligations as regards Collective Worship.

A school will be regarded as ineffective as a church school if the school's leaders have failed to ensure that collective worship reflects the school's distinctive foundation or funding agreement.

11: Worship, SMSC and British Values?!

Jesus said 'I have come that you might have life, and have it to the full' John 10:10

'The worth of each student impels us to work to fulfil their God-given potential, whatever the religious or other tradition with which they or their family identify, and with special consideration given to those who are disadvantaged. Each is to be understood as respectfully and deeply as possible; to be encouraged to stretch themselves spiritually, morally, intellectually, imaginatively and actively, and to aspire to be well-educated. This involves not only grasping how one's own fulfilment cannot be separated from that of other people or from the flourishing of families, groups, communities, institutions, nations, and the whole of creation, so that hope and aspiration are social as well as individual, but also being realistic about how much can and does go wrong.'

Church of England Vision for Education, July 2016

Since 1988, the overall purpose of all schools' curriculum is to:

- a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society;
- b) prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The whole curriculum emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in schools was renewed in 2012, and has remained a feature of Ofsted inspections ever since.



In November 2014, the DfE released additional guidance in relation to '[Fundamental British Values](#)' (follow the hyperlink for the full document), as part of schools' duty to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all pupils. It is clear from this document that collective worship has a significant contribution to make to the Fundamental British Values agenda:

'Meeting requirements for collective worship, establishing a strong school ethos supported by effective relationships throughout the school, and providing relevant activities beyond the classroom are all ways of ensuring pupils' SMSC development.'

(Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools, Guidance from the DfE, 2014 p4)

The guidance sets out that through their SMSC provision, schools should:

- enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England;
- encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely;
- enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- encourage respect for other people; and
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

This language and approach are also clearly reflected in Ofsted's definitions of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ([Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, December 2017](#)), outlined overleaf:

'This is a startlingly challenging duty placed on schools. Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, as it has become known, is about the nurture of them as human beings and, as such, is the most important job a school is charged with fulfilling. Doing the same **for society** is mind blowing. It is a shared responsibility involving the whole school and the whole curriculum.' *Julie Grove*

- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

Collective worship in Church schools could and **should**, then, be a significant contributor to pupils' SMSC development, and give them opportunities to:

- develop cohesion amongst the school community, helping to promote and strengthen every member's belonging and unique contribution to the school, whether they are religious or not;
- celebrate being part of a school community;
- affirm the shared values of the school community;
- broaden pupils' awareness of themselves, others and the world in which they live;
- explore areas which directly concern them, related to age, ability and experience;
- experience religious worship;
- explore and question their own beliefs and values, alongside the beliefs and values of others, including the Christian community of which the school is a part;
- become reflective, deep thinking individuals in a busy and complex society;
- deepen understanding of their own culture and that of others, recognising that cultural diversity is enriching rather than threatening.

12: Frequently asked questions



1. What about hymn practices?

What we used to call 'hymn practices' are now more commonly known as 'singing assemblies'. Often these are arranged on a regular basis, and are used in order to teach new songs, improve singing and, in most cases, give staff a break. So how can they be transformed in such a way that they become meaningful acts of school worship?

Perhaps this is a matter of focus and aim. If the focus is purely on singing, or actions, or musical ability, it is difficult to transform it into worship. But if the focus is on God, on understanding of the words, singing a thanksgiving song as thanks, praying a prayer song – then the whole experience will be transformed.

It will certainly need an introduction along these lines to help the children sense the context of their singing.

This process may be aided by the lighting of a candle to remind the school that God is present, or using any welcome liturgy that would be familiar to children during 'regular' worship times.

Time should also be taken to reflect on the words being sung. Children might be encouraged to think about why a song was written, or given the opportunity to ask about it. Such occasions might also present the opportunity to learn and practise 'signing' to accompany songs, or other 'actions/forms of movement', which further enhances pupil engagement.

Within a singing assembly, time could also be set aside for a prayer or quiet reflection, perhaps following a suitable song.

2. Our classes take it in turn to lead a school assembly. Is there a danger that the worship element will be missed?

There certainly have been examples where a class assembly theme has left no room for more than a perfunctory 'prayer at the end'. But far more frequently good examples are seen where worship and reflection are very much at the heart of a presentation.

In planning a 'class assembly', allow the children to think creatively about connections with worship, prayer and thanksgiving. Why not forget the 'big presentation' and allow the children to prepare an act of collective worship for the school around a simple theme? Your school worship team, if you have one, could help with this.

Ultimately however it will be for the class teacher, with support from the coordinator, to ensure that worship is at the heart of the class presentation and not simply an add-on.

3. We hold a weekly 'celebration' or 'good work' assembly. Can this be re-focused so that it is worshipful?

This sort of gathering should be framed in the context of thanksgiving and celebration; an opportunity to encourage and endorse good work, good behaviour and effort.

But not only are we thinking and commending individuals or groups, but also thanking God for the gifts he has given. Perhaps the most powerful concept is that of the offering. We have been given gifts, we now re-commit our gifts to God, allowing them to use us and our gifts in his service. This could be enacted in various ways. For example – certificates are presented and copies placed together on a 'thank you' tree, or an offering bowl – to signify a desire to give our best to God. At the heart of the session is worship, thinking back on the week (celebration assemblies are often at end of the week), giving thanks and praise and praying for a world that needs our gifts and talents.

4. What about classroom-based worship?

In larger schools, it is sometimes necessary to adopt a pattern of daily worship to include whole school, key stage, year group, and class-based worship.

Class-based worship has the advantage of allowing a theme, pupil participation and responses to be more precisely tailored to the particular class. On the other hand, these call for many more staff to be involved –

staff who may not always feel comfortable with leading worship. On the positive side, what better way to learn to lead worship than in the smaller group, and with those children you are most familiar with?!

Consider:

- Ways to change the 'feel' of the classroom for worship. Think space, colour, music, seating..... use the ideas suggested in **section 3: A time apart.**
- The most appropriate time for this to happen, so that minds are fresh and able to concentrate on an act of worship.
- How to use the greater opportunity for children to take an active part.
- Occasionally swapping teachers to lead class worship.
- What the focal point will be for worship.
- How the theme will dove-tail with the school worship theme, without duplication.
- How to capture what comes out of class worship times – perhaps in displays, collections of thoughts and prayers etc.

There are some excellent resources available that develop these moments for reflection. Visit the Resource Centre for further assistance, or use some weblinks suggested in **section 8: Resources.**

13. School Eucharists in the Diocese of Guildford

This guidance is for those wishing to hold an Anglican Eucharist in a school context including schools in the independent sector.

The Communion Service is at the heart of Anglican worship. It celebrates Jesus' command to his disciples at the Last Supper 'Do this in remembrance of me' and in many churches is the main service on a Sunday. It is known by different names that reflect the tradition of the church concerned: Eucharist (from the Greek word meaning 'thanksgiving'); Holy Communion; The Lord's Supper; and Mass.

There are several reasons why schools may be keen to give pupils an experience of taking part in a Eucharist:

- The school is part of the local parish, therefore it provides an opportunity for pupils to share in this key act of worship with the local community
- It provides an occasion for the school to worship in the context of the most important service of the church
- The first-hand experience of being present at a Eucharist can give pupils a sense of belonging and participation which demonstrates the church's open invitation to all
- Learning about the Communion Service in Religious Education lessons is brought to life by taking part in one

It is not a requirement of the Church of England, or the Diocese of Guildford that schools celebrate the Eucharist. There is no expectation in the SIAMS framework that schools should hold a Eucharist. The decision about holding a school a Eucharist must be made in conjunction with the vicar and reflect the practice of the parish in which the school is located. Consideration should be given to the faith background of the pupils in the school at the time.

A Eucharist celebrates belonging to a Christian community. Where some pupils and staff are unable to receive the bread and wine it can have the opposite effect. Where this is the case a Eucharist may not be appropriate but another form of service such as an Agape Meal may be more suitable.

Any school Eucharists that take place are part of the worship of the parish, and should therefore be led by the vicar or (in case of a vacancy) by another Church of England minister'. The Eucharist would be recorded in the parish service register. Suitable members of the parish may be invited to attend or assist. For example where a large number of pupils request a blessing the youth and children's worker or church wardens may be able to assist.

The decision to hold a school Eucharist must be carefully considered by the Headteacher and the vicar. Governors, staff, parents and pupils should be consulted before the first Eucharist and their feedback gathered afterwards to enable improvements to be made. For the pupils to gain the most from the Eucharist careful preparation is needed and adequate time should be allocated for this before the service.

Some school Eucharists are for the staff, offered before or after school or during an inset day.

In secondary schools some Eucharists are optional for pupils held during form time or lunch break. In Guildford Diocesan Board of Education April 2018

schools fortunate enough to have a chaplain they are likely to know the pupils who choose to attend if the pupil is able to receive bread and wine.

There are different approaches to remembering Jesus' sharing of bread and wine with pupils. Not all are a Eucharist.

Agape

This is based on the agape meals shared by the early Christians. In a school context there would be a simple liturgy and prayers and some food and or drink would be shared. This food, often bread or grapes, has not been consecrated.

Re-enactment of the Last Supper

This is an acting out of the events of the Last supper by adults or children. All present may share some bread and or grape juice during it. The bread and grape juice has not been consecrated. It will may have been blessed in the course of the re-enactment but not using a Eucharistic prayer.

A demonstration of what happens in an Anglican Communion Service to be observed by pupils

This is a Eucharist at which adults who have been confirmed receive the bread and wine. The priest may stop and explain what they are doing to the pupils as they go through the service.

A Eucharist in which everyone can join in at some level with clear explanations of why some may receive and some not

This is a Eucharist in which all pupils are involved in aspects such as they singing, prayers and readings. Only those pupils who have been admitted to communion or confirmed will receive the bread and wine. However all are made to feel part of the worship.

Who can receive the consecrated bread and wine?

- Adults who have been confirmed in the Church of England or the equivalent rite of membership in another Christian denomination.
- Pupils who have been confirmed in the Church of England.
- Pupils who have been admitted to communion before confirmation in the parish in which the school is located, or in their home parish if this is different.

Parental Permission

- Parental permission must be given for a pupil to receive communion.
- There needs to be discussion with parents or carers where a pupil attends a church of another Christian denomination in which they receive communion

What is meant by admission to communion before confirmation?

Information for parishes in the Diocese of Guildford on the Admission of Baptized Children to Holy Communion before Confirmation can be found [here](#).

Under Church of England policy, only children who have been admitted to communion before confirmation may receive the elements. Parishes apply to the Bishop for the permission to admit children to communion in their parish. Schools should be aware that not all parishes in the Diocese of Guildford have applied for or received this permission.

There is no minimum age recommendation at which children can be admitted to communion. The age at which a child can receive communion is left to the vicar's discretion. The guidance is clear that some understanding of the significance of what they are doing is required for children to receive communion.

Under Church of England policy this admission to communion must follow a period of preparation, usually undertaken in the parish.

Communion preparation should usually take place with one of the child's parents present.

The preparation consists of an age appropriate course about communion, which includes information about confirmation.

At the end of the preparation course the children will be admitted to communion, and take their first communion, in their parish church. This often includes the presentation of a certificate and sometimes a Bible.

The parish keeps a register of children admitted to communion before confirmation.

Where admission to communion is within a school context this can only happen in parishes where the Bishop's permission to admit children has been applied for and received.

In the event that preparation for communion is carried out in the school setting, for example in an after school group, the pupils would be expected to be admitted to communion in the parish before receiving communion during a school Eucharist.

When a group of children from a school are being prepared to receive communion before confirmation, it should be made clear that they are part of a wider (Anglican) church community.

Children at a school may be from several different parishes, so communication between parish priests around the admission of children to communion is essential.

In deanery schools, which are linked to more than one parish, communication between all of the parish priests and the headteacher is essential.

Resources

The Bishop of Guildford's guidance on the Admission of Baptized Children to Holy Communion before Confirmation can be found on the Diocese of Guildford Website [here](#).

www.cofeguildford.org.uk/young-people/ministry/children-and-communion

Church of England Guidance on Celebrating the Eucharist with Children [here](#)

This gives guidance on Eucharists with large numbers of children present, specifically mentions school

Eucharists. There are two additional Eucharistic Prayers for use with schools.

Exploring Holy Communion in Primary Schools by Shahne Vickery Jumping Fish Publications, found on the Going4growth website

[Pdf here](#)

This gives ideas of how each year group can be involved in creating part of the communion service. It has been used in several of our schools who have found it helpful.

Our School Eucharist – A look at how one primary school prepared and celebrated their Eucharist for the very first time. £15 plus postage [Order here](#)

The Diocesan Resources Centre holds various materials for parishes to use when preparing children to be admitted to communion. This is the responsibility of the parish not the school, although it may be done together.

Appendix 1: The Legal Framework for Collective Worship



The place of collective worship in schools is upheld by law and has been so since 1944. The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) affirmed its statutory position, relaxing some of the restrictions on the grouping and timing of Collective Worship, confirming what had become widespread practice in schools. The subsequent 1996 Education Act and 1998 School Standards and Framework Act further confirmed the requirements, since when there has been no change to this primary legislation, by which duty schools remain bound:

‘each pupil in attendance at a community, foundation or voluntary school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship’

1998 School Standards & Framework Act – Part II Chapter 6 para 70 (1)

There are only two exceptions to this:

1. parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship
2. pupils in Y12 and above [the sixth form] may also exercise their right to withdraw.

If parents do make a request to withdraw their child, or a student in sixth form, the diocese recommends that careful discussion should take place between all concerned, especially in the light of the suggestions for inclusive worship contained within this document, so that informed choices can be made. Staff may also exercise the right of withdrawal. Help to manage the right of withdrawal for both pupils and staff can be found in **Appendix 2: Withdrawal from collective worship – some practicalities.**

The main provisions for collective worship are contained in Sections 6 and 7 of the Education Reform Act 1988, and in Chapter VI ‘Religious Education and worship’ (sections 70 & 71) and Schedule 20 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act (an excerpt of which can be found at the end of this appendix.)

There have been recommendations from many different quarters to amend this legislation, including in a relatively recent report ‘Collective Worship and Religious Observance in Schools’, published in November 2015. However, there has been no engagement by the government with the recommendations here and in other places, and so the legal structures upholding the act of collective worship remain.



The Fundamental British Values initiative (brought by the DfE into schools from November 2014) also makes it clear that the act of collective worship is one way in which schools can be seen to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, stating that:

‘Meeting requirements for collective worship, establishing a strong school ethos supported by effective relationships throughout the school, and providing relevant activities beyond the classroom are all ways of ensuring pupils’ SMSC development.’

(Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in schools, Guidance from the DfE, 2014 p4)

This theme, the contribution of school worship to pupils’ SMSC development, is further explored **in section 7: Worship, SMSC, and British Values?!** Schools may wish to use elements of these sections to refer to in their school’s collective worship policy.

A gallop through collective worship history...

Under the 1944 Act, ‘assemblies’ as they were called had to be held at the beginning of the day and all children had to be in one place. This applied to all schools – ‘county’ and ‘church’ schools.

Following the Education Reform Act in 1988 and the guidance given in ‘Circular 1/94’ this was replaced by a ‘daily act of collective worship’. In County (later, community) schools, the law stated that acts of collective worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian nature; that is that they must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief. No longer need they occur at the beginning of the day, and no longer need they be whole school gatherings.

However, in Church Schools (VA or VC) collective worship must be:

- daily for all registered pupils;
- organised to allow pupils to be withdrawn if parents have so requested;

- in accordance with the religious character of the school, as determined by the Governing Body and in line with its Trust Deed.

Church School collective worship is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 by Diocesan inspectors. In Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools and in foundation schools, the daily act of collective worship must *always* be held according to the stipulations of the Trust Deed. That is, they are always of a broadly Christian nature. This is the original legal basis on which the school was founded. The stipulations are now enshrined in the school ethos statement, which is in turn included in the Instrument of Government.

In Guildford Diocese many of our schools have adopted the following wording for their ethos statements:

‘Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The school aims to serve its community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all its pupils.’

This means that in Church of England schools, school worship will be consistent with the faith and practices of the Anglican Church, as supported by their Trust Deed.

In Church of England schools (VC & VA), it is the governors who hold overall responsibility for ensuring that the law is kept. In practice it is usually the head-teachers and staff who plan the daily acts of worship, often in association with the incumbent and governors, but the governors hold the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the requirements of the law are met.

The distinction has helpfully been made between ‘collective worship’ and ‘corporate worship’. Corporate worship, based on the word ‘corpus’ = body, is only possible for a body of believers, who essentially believe the same things. Collective worship acknowledges that we are not a ‘body of believers’ but a collection of individuals. Even in a Church school, where the context and object of our worship is Christian, we still engage in **collective**, rather than **corporate** worship. This, of course, allows for the presence, and it is hoped, inclusion and willing participation of members of the school community who come from faith backgrounds other than Christianity, or from no faith background at all. **Section 4: An inclusive community** gives further guidance.



In the words of the guidance document Circular 1/94:

‘Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.’

One of the most important elements here in the guidance is the word ‘opportunity’. Whilst in church schools worship is an essential core element of school life, it should also be a voluntary act: there should be no compulsion to worship, and schools should make this clear to all who lead acts of collective worship. Worship is an open invitation, but it is for pupils – and staff – to use that opportunity if they feel comfortable doing so. The language that schools use to frame the act of worship should make this clear. There is further help in **section 1: Worship in a Church of England School**.

The daily act of worship has to be a distinctive act and cannot be subsumed in other activities or lessons, such as Religious Education. RE can inspire the themes for worship, but cannot be taught through the act of worship. Aided schools may hold their act of worship in a church, for example on special occasions.

Appendix 2: Withdrawal from collective worship – some practicalities

In both Acts of Parliament the right of parents to withdraw their children from school worship was made clear (*see excerpt at appendix end*). This right should be clearly communicated in school documents such as the school prospectus and worship policy. If parents do make a request to withdraw their child, or a student in sixth form, the diocese recommends that careful discussion should take place between all concerned, especially in the light of the suggestions for inclusive worship contained within this document, so that informed choices can be made.

Parents do not need to explain their reasons for seeking withdrawal. The Diocese recommends that to avoid misunderstanding, a head teacher may wish to clarify with any parent wanting to withdraw their child(ren):

- the religious issues which the parent would object their child being exposed to;
- the practical implications of withdrawal;
- the circumstances in which it would be reasonable to accommodate parents' wishes;
- if a parent will require any advanced notice of such issue in the future and if so, how much.

Whilst it is hoped that parents who choose to send their children to a church school would be supportive of the act of collective worship, it can certainly not be assumed, and if a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.

From a school perspective, it makes it very much easier to successfully enact a withdrawal if the elements of an assembly e.g. notices, sharing information, celebrating successes etc. are distinct from the elements that constitute the act of worship. Such a distinction enables 'withdrawn' children to still be a part of the school community, yet still be easily removed from worship at the point that it actually becomes worship.

A school remains responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn from collective worship (unless the child is lawfully taking part in collective worship elsewhere), though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra costs.

Care should be taken not to confuse a request for an absence for religious observance with a request for withdrawal from RE or collective worship.

Withdrawal of staff from collective worship

In **Voluntary Aided schools**, teachers are generally required to take part in collective worship, and to uphold the Christian ethos upon which it is based. However, at the discretion of the head-teacher and governing body teachers may request permission to withdraw from worship.

There is an infrequently-used guidance contract that relates to 'reserved teachers' in **Voluntary Controlled schools**, which states that they may appoint up to 20% of the staff (including the headteacher) as Reserved Teachers. (*See next page for details.*) In VC schools only headteachers and Reserved Teachers have a contractual responsibility to lead and take part in acts of worship. In the unlikely scenario that no-one on your staff is able to teach RE or lead collective worship, please see below:

Taken from 'Selecting appointing and developing staff in Church of England Schools' (2009) – for the whole document click [here](#)

C.3 Reserved teachers

3.1 A particular feature of voluntary controlled schools and foundation schools that have a religious character is the facility to designate some teachers 'reserved teachers'. These teachers are full members of the teaching staff, not additional teachers. A condition of their appointment is that they can demonstrate their ability to teach religious education in accordance with an Anglican syllabus should any parent exercise their right to request 'trust deed' religious education rather than agreed syllabus religious education. The foundation governors must approve the appointment of reserved teachers. Under section 37 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 the headteacher of the school can now be a reserved teacher. The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 already permitted deputy headteachers to be reserved teachers. The proportion of reserved teachers in a school depends on the number of staff. Where there are

two or more teaching staff, one of them must be a reserved teacher. The total number of reserved teachers must not exceed one fifth of the total number of teachers (Schools Standards and Framework Act, 1998, Section 58 (3)).

3.2 In secondary schools it will be usual for members of the RE department to be reserved teachers. In primary schools it will often be the RE coordinator. In many schools the appointment of reserved teachers has fallen into abeyance in recent years. The appointment of such teachers can provide important support to the development of the Christian ethos of the school. When vacancies occur in voluntary controlled schools that have no designated reserved teacher, the foundation governors should consider whether it would be appropriate to raise the issue before the vacancy is advertised.

Extract from the 1988 ERA: The right of withdrawal was established in the Education Act 1944, re-enacted in the Education Reform Act 1988 s9(3), an extract of which follows:

Exceptions, special arrangements and supplementary and consequential provisions.

9. (3) *If the parent of any pupil in attendance at any maintained school requests that he may be wholly or partly excused—*

(a) from attendance at religious worship in the school;

(b) from receiving religious education given in the school in accordance with the school's basic curriculum; or

(c) both from such attendance and from receiving such education;

the pupil shall be so excused accordingly until the request is withdrawn.

(4) Where in accordance with subsection (3) above any pupil has been wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship or from receiving religious education in any school, and the responsible authority are satisfied—

(a) that the parent of the pupil desires him to receive religious education of a kind which is not provided in the school during the periods of time during which he is so excused;

(b) that the pupil cannot with reasonable convenience be sent to another maintained school where religious education of the kind desired by the parent is provided; and

(c) that arrangements have been made for him to receive religious education of that kind during school hours elsewhere;

the pupil may be withdrawn from the school during such periods of time as are reasonably necessary for the purpose of enabling him to receive religious education in accordance with the arrangements.

(5) In this section "the responsible authority" means—

(a) in relation to a county or voluntary school, the local education authority; and

(b) in relation to a grant-maintained school, the governing body.

(6) A pupil may not be withdrawn from school under subsection (4) above unless the responsible authority are satisfied that the arrangements there mentioned are such as will not interfere with the attendance of the pupil at school on any day except at the beginning or end of the school session or, if there is more than one, of any school session on that day.

..... *(9) In this section—*

(a) references to religious worship in a school include references to religious worship which under section 6 of this Act takes place otherwise than on the school premises; and

(b) references to religious education given in a school in accordance with the school's basic curriculum are references to such education given in accordance with the provision included in the school's basic curriculum by virtue of section 2(1)(a) of this Act.

A complete copy of the 1988 ERA can be found at

www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1988/Ukpga_19880040_en_1.htm#end

Appendix 3: Christian Values, Fruits of the Spirit and British Values in Church Schools

Introduction

The requirement for schools to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain with a focus on British values is a new challenge for schools. Church schools have always been able to articulate the Christian values that underpin the life of their school. There is some overlap between the two sets of values and this document is an attempt to demonstrate those links.

The key Christian principles that underpin both Christian Values and British values are:

- That every person is made in the image of God: every person is valued and their voice counts
- That God is a God of order
- That the Bible demonstrates the need for law
- That Christian Values and British values can be summed up in the New Commandment. “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” John 15 V 12

In this document we have linked the DfEs definition of British values with the Christian Values and the Fruits of the Spirit to help schools to demonstrate how the Christian values can enable a school to meet the DfE requirements. We have included a few examples of good practice, schools will have more examples and we would welcome being told about these.

The list of useful resources contains further information and links to Biblical material that enhances teaching about the Christian values in this list.

Appendix one contains some suggestions of Bible verses and narratives that could be used to give examples of the DfE’s British values in a Biblical context.

Jane Whittington

December 2015

Christian Values, Fruits of the Spirit and British Values in Church Schools

Love one another					
British Values	Democracy	Rule of law	Individual liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of different cultures and religions
Possible linked Christian values	Peace Truthfulness Koinonia (Community) wisdom Respect (listening) Responsibility	Justice Compassion Humility Peace Trust Service Wisdom Responsibility Respect Honesty Self-control	Courage Hope Humility Justice Peace Endurance Reverence Service Responsibility	Compassion Creativity Forgiveness Friendship Humility Justice Peace Thankfulness Trust Truthfulness Love(agape) Reverence Stewardship Respect Patience Perseverance	Compassion Creativity Forgiveness/reconciliation Friendship Humility Justice Peace Trust Truthfulness Koinonia (Community) Love (agape) Respect Patience Perseverance
Fruits of the Spirit	Goodness Self-control Peace	Gentleness Goodness Peace Self-control	Faithfulness Gentleness Goodness Kindness Love Peace Self-control	Faithfulness Gentleness Goodness Joy Kindness Love Patience	Gentleness Goodness Kindness Love Patience Peace Self-control

				Peace Self-control	
Examples of good practice	Class charter School council Mock elections Debates Parent forum Visits from local Counsellors, MP Democracy day (when the school council / house captains etc are elected)	Clear behaviour policy Class charter agreed with pupils and reviewed annually Visits from police.	Whole community involved in agreeing school values Pupils making choices within boundaries Additional roles and responsibilities for all year groups	Respect for the planet/ grounds projects Forest school Charity projects linked to concept of “give a man a fish and he is fed for a day, give a man a fishing rod and he is fed for a month” Activities such as hot seating, conscience alley etc. to enable pupils to inhabit someone else’s shoes.	Visits to a variety of places of worship Visits by people from a variety of cultures and faiths. Celebration of Christian festivals using materials from around the world
British Values	Democracy	Rule of law	Individual liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of different cultures and religions

Key to colours used for Christian Values

Value taken from Values for Life – Teaching Values in Primary Schools 2006

Value taken from Christian Values – A workbook for schools Diocese of Ely www.elydiocese.org/supporting-schools/resources-for-schools/ten-christian-values

Resources that may be helpful.

Christian Values – A workbook for schools Diocese of Ely download from www.elydiocese.org/supporting-schools/resources-for-schools/ten-christian-values/

Christianvalues4 Schools.co.uk website <http://www.christianvalues4schools.org.uk/>

Encounters with Faith – Visits and visitors as part of Religious Education and collective worship in Surrey Schools download from www.cofeguildford.org.uk/education/our-school-services/re/resources

Fruits of the Spirit - A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education download from www.cofeguildford.org.uk/education/our-school-services/re/resources

Religious Education and British Values; issues, opportunities and resources - RE Today 2015 hard copy only £15

Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural Development – a Christian perspective Norwich Diocese download from www.dioceseofnorwich.org/schools/advice/smsc-development/

Roots and Fruits Collective worship for Primary Schools on Christian Values themes Imaginor 2014 hard copy £55 for 2 years of Collective Worship materials

UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools – is helpful for practical ideas in school website www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/

Values for Life – Teaching Values in Primary Schools Jumping Fish Out of print but hard copy available for loan in Diocesan Resources Centre

Spiritual and moral development through values education a variety of materials for primary schools www.imaginor.co.uk/imaginor/

Bible verses and narratives that support teaching values

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you” John 15 V 12

British Values	Democracy	Rule of law	Individual liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of different cultures and religions
Biblical verses about this value	See I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction now choose life that you and your children may live. Deuteronomy 30v 15-19 Calling the disciples Matt 4v 18-21	Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. Romans 13 v 1 Jesus teaches about the law Matt 5 v 17-20	It is for freedom that Christ has set us free Galatian 5v1 Jesus the truth sets us free John 8v32	Be devoted to one another, love one another above yourselves Romans 12v10 We are made in the image of God Genesis 1v27	Do not judge others and you will not be judged Matthew 7v1
Bible Stories that demonstrate this value	Who should sit at Jesus right and left hand Matthew 20 v 20-23	Paying taxes to Caesar Luke 20 Be “in” the world not “of” the world Message of Isaiah 2,3,11 The true mother 1 Kings 3 Zacchaeus Luke 19	Adam and Eve Genesis 2&3 Ten Lepers Luke 17-11-19 Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane Matthew 26v36-46 The rich young man Matthew 19	Good Samaritan Luke 10 Creation Genesis 1 Wonders of creation Psalm 8 Let the whole world praise God Psalm 148 The soldiers faith	Naaman and the little servant girl 2 kings 5 Moses in the bulrushes Exodus 1,2 Good Samaritan Luke 10 Jesus and the children Matthew 19, Mark 10, Luke 18 The woman at the well John 4v1-26

		<p>Moses and the Ten Commandments Exodus 20</p> <p>Jesus new commandment John 13v 34</p> <p>Jesus in the temple(showed his family followed Jewish law) Luke 2v 41-52</p>	<p>The two builders Matthew7 Luke6</p> <p>Zacchaeus Luke 19</p> <p>Parable of the vineyard owner Mark 12v 1-14</p>	<p>Luke 7</p> <p>Mary, Martha</p> <p>Lazarus Luke 10</p> <p>Jesus washed the disciples feet</p> <p>Story of Ruth Ruth 1-4</p>	
British Values	Democracy	Rule of law	Individual liberty	Mutual Respect	Tolerance of different cultures and religions

Appendix 4: The role of the collective worship governor

It is good practice to have a governor with responsibility for Collective Worship. Parental queries can arise around issues such as the right of withdrawal from collective worship, educational visits to places of worship, observance of dress codes or festivals. It is wise to have a governor who is involved in making decisions about these aspects of school life and fully aware of what the school are doing.

This governor should be aware of:

- the legal status of Collective Worship;
- the Collective Worship programme being followed in the school;
- the parental right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship;
- how the school manages requests for withdrawal and the alternative purposeful provision for pupils who do not attend Collective Worship;
- educational visits to places of worship. If they can be art of planning the visit and take part in the visit that would be helpful;
- faith visitors to the school to take part Collective Worship;
- any extracurricular clubs of a faith based nature;
- who leads Collective Worship in the school.
- the Collective Worship development plan and any cost implications for implementing the plan. There is unlikely to be one every year but it should be a focus as part of a rolling programme;
- the Collective Worship budget.

The collective worship governor should:

- meet with the Collective Worship leader at least once a year;
- keep the Governing Body up to date with important Collective Worship developments in the school, the borough and nationally;
- visit the school to observe Collective Worship at least once a year;
- work with the Collective Worship leader to consider the impact of Collective Worship on the school community.



Appendix 5: Examples of planned collective worship

What follows below are some samples of collective worship using the structure suggested within these guidelines. Two are explicitly Christian, two are from other faiths, and two are 'non-religious', to demonstrate how each can be worked out within the context of church schools' trust deeds.

Date: 12 th February 2013	Group of Children: Years 1-6
Timing: 10.10-10.30	Led by: Jane Whittington
<p>Aim(s): To know about the meaning of Lent. To consider some of the things that they feel sorry for.</p>	
<p>Resources needed: Rubbish Brooms Dustpan and brush Frying pans Paper pancakes Large pens</p>	
<p>Content of worship:</p> <p>Gathering: Use a greeting that your children are familiar with e.g. say or sign Leader: Peace be with you Response: And also with you</p> <p>Engaging: Plant rubbish around the hall Ask children to help clean up using dustpan and brush broom etc. The hall looks much cleaner now.</p> <p>Talk about things that we do or say that make us feel 'dirty'. Explain Lent as a time when Christians think about the things that they are sorry for. They show that by giving things up, or especially trying to more good things. Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent starts and so in the past people used up their eggs and butter by making pancakes.</p>	
<p>Responding: Reflection / Prayer: Gather ideas of things that we might be sorry for and write in the pancakes shapes. Use them to create an extempore prayer.</p>	
<p>Sending: Use a sentence that will remind children of the theme e.g. 'As we go through today, may we trust in God to help us to say sorry.'</p>	
<p>Music used/sung: Music on way in 'Freely, freely' Hymn 'Peace perfect peace'</p>	
<p>Evaluation:</p>	

Date: Wednesday 29 th June 2011	Group of Children: Whole School
Timing: 10.10-10.25	Led by: Jane Whittington
<p>Aim(s): To be aware of Jesus' teaching about the value of individuals. To be aware of God's love for them as an individual. To consider things that make them anxious and pass them onto God using the visual illustration.</p>	
<p>Resources needed: Copy of the verse Matthew 10:30 'God even knows the number of hairs on your head – so don't be afraid' on screen Hairbrush Vase of water, Vitamin tablet</p>	
<p>Content of worship:</p>	
<p>Gathering: Use a greeting that your children are familiar with e.g. say or sign Leader: God is here Response: His Spirit is with us</p> <p>Engaging: Ask who knows you really well? Get some pairs of siblings (or best friends) to the front and ask them questions about each other. How old is your brother / sister / friend? What is their favourite colour? What is their favourite food? Who is their best friend / other friends? What is their favourite lesson at school?</p> <p>Talk about how much they know and how much they don't know about that person. Share Bible verse on the screen. Brush my hair and try to count the hairs on the brush. Talk about how impossible it would be to count all the hairs on a head. But God knows each of us so well that he does know. He wants us to tell him the things that worry us, and he will help. Think of a thing that worries you at the moment. Use the dissolving vitamin table to demonstrate worries dissolving away when we give them to God.</p>	
<p>Responding: Reflection / Prayer Children think about what they are worried about. Watch as the worry dissolves in the water. Invite them to join together in this responsive prayer:</p> <p>Dear God, When I am frightened, Thank you that you care. When I am feeling lonely or left out, Thank you that you care. When I am worried about my family, Thank you that you care. When I am feeling ill, Thank you that you care. Amen</p>	
<p>Sending: Use a sentence that will remind children of the theme e.g. 'May God who loves you and knows every hair on your head bless you this day.'</p>	
<p>Music used/sung: Taize CD 'O Lord Hear my prayer' Hymn 'Shalom'</p>	
<p>Evaluation:</p>	

Date: January 23 rd 2012	Group of Children: Whole School
Timing: 10.10-10.25	Led by: Rachel Boxer
Aim(s): To learn about some customs of Chinese New Year – ‘lucky money’, dragons & generosity To think about what it means to be generous To hear what the Bible says about being generous	
Resources needed: Red envelopes containing ‘lucky’ money (a chocolate coin) and a card beginning ‘A generous person.....’ You will need to complete these with some ideas about what it means to be generous. Leave one blank to help children to think of their own ideas. The Bible verse ‘Be generous on every occasion’ (2 Corinthians 9:11) on screen	
Content of worship:	
Gathering: use a greeting that children are familiar with e.g. Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made. Response: We will rejoice and be glad in it.	
Engaging: If you have children from Chinese cultures in your school, you might want to ask them to lead this part of the assembly with you and talk about their views of / feelings about this important time of year for them. Share the lucky envelopes, reading the card that is inside, and rewarding with the lucky money. Share the story using the script [below], asking children to think about how the dragons were generous. Chinese New Year is a time to show generosity and commit to being generous in the new year that lies ahead. Share the Bible verse [show words on screen]	
Responding: Reflection / Prayer: I wonder what it might look like if we tried this out in our school – being generous on every occasion?.....think quietly about that for a few moments. As I read the lucky cards again, take time to reflect on how you might be generous today, or sometime this week....or even try to always be generous... Invite children to join in the responses for this prayer (on screen) Dear God We bring to you our time Help us to be generous. We bring to you our love Help us to be generous. In our school, our families and our community Help us to be generous. Amen	
Sending: Use a sentence that will remind children of the theme e.g. ‘As we go into today, be generous on every occasion’	
Music used/sung: Some Chinese dragon dance music, or show a clip on CBeebies ‘Let’s celebrate Chinese New Year’ as children come in. Sing ‘Let’s sing and dance’ (BBC Come and Praise: Beginning)	
Evaluation:	

The Generous Dragons – a story for Chinese New Year

Today we are going to be thinking about a very special day for people who are Chinese – Chinese New Year. One thing that you might see at Chinese New Year is a dragon dance. The Chinese believe dragons to be friendly and helpful creatures, associated with strength, good fortune, wisdom and long life. We're going to hear a story from China about some dragons now. It's called 'The Generous Dragons'. As you listen, think about how the dragons showed that they were **generous.....**

Long, long ago, there were no rivers or lakes on the earth, but only the Eastern Sea. Four dragons lived in it – the Long Dragon, the Black Dragon, the Yellow Dragon and the Pearl Dragon. They were all wise and generous creatures and they loved to fly, high in the sky, soaring above the sea and out over the land. One day, they looked down and saw something they had never seen before.

The land which had once been green and fertile was now brown and parched, because there had been no rain for a long time. The people who lived on it were looking hungry and worried, and the dragons wanted to do something to help.

'How poor the people are!' the Yellow Dragon exclaimed. 'If they don't have rain soon, they will have no food to eat.' So the dragons decided to go and see the Jade Emperor to beg him for rain and soared high into the clouds to find the Heavenly Palace.

They presented their case to the Jade Emperor, pleading for him to send rain to the villagers so that they might grow food to eat. 'OK' he said, 'You go down first and I'll send rain tomorrow.' The dragons gratefully thanked the Emperor and flew away happy.

But tomorrow came, and there was no rain, or the day after, or the day after that. Ten days passed, and the people of the village were running out of food to eat and water to drink. The four dragons saw all this, and were saddened. They knew that the Emperor had forgotten his promise, and so decided to do something about it themselves.

'There is plenty of water in the Eastern Sea, where we live!' the Long Dragon. 'Let's scoop it up and spray it down over the village, and it will look like rain, and the people won't die!'

'That's a great idea!' the other dragons exclaimed, but then they thought deeply for a moment. 'If the Emperor finds out we have done this, we'll be in trouble...'

But they decided that it was more important to save the people, and so off they flew, back to the Eastern Sea, and began to scoop up water in their mouths to spray out over the earth. They flew backwards and forwards, high up into the sky doing this until the sky became dark and the sea water became rain pouring out of the sky.

'It's raining! It's raining!' the people shouted, and knew they had been saved.

But the Jade Emperor found out about the generous deed of the four dragons and decided to punish them for interfering. He gathered his army and they brought the dragons to the Palace.

'Go and find four mountains' he ordered. 'Then lay the mountains on them so that they can never escape!'

And that's what happened, but the dragons were still glad that they had saved the villagers. Even as they were, stuck under the mountains, they decided to do one last good deed to help the people. They turned

themselves into four rivers to give the people of China water forever. And that's how China's four great rivers were formed, by the kindness of the Generous Dragons.

Date: Thursday 9 th October 2014	Group of Children: Whole School
Timing: 10.10-10.25	Led by: Rachel Boxer
Aim(s): To learn about the Jewish Sukkot celebration To think about why it's important to be grateful To think about how God has provided for them and reflect on things they are grateful for	
Resources needed: Orange and lemon shapes cut out of coloured paper, hole-punched to aid hanging (use opened-out paperclips) Pens Branches in a heavy pot to hang the 'fruit' on	
Content of worship:	
Gathering: use a greeting that children are familiar with e.g. Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made. Response: We will rejoice and be glad in it.	
Engaging: Gather ideas from the children about things they are grateful for and write them onto a lemon or orange shape	
Responding: Reflection / Prayer: About this time of year, Jewish people celebrate their harvest festival of Sukkot, when they remember this story of how God provides. During Sukkot, they'll eat outdoors in shelters that they build out of tree branches, and they'll hang up fruit, like our oranges & lemons as a reminder of how God provides for them. This morning, we've collected OUR ideas about things that God provides – things we're grateful for – on these oranges & lemons, and we can hang them up as a reminder for ustake time now to be grateful..... [read out what you gathered and hang them on the branches as you reflect together] Use the prayer, inviting children to make the prayer their own in some way if they'd like to: Dear God Thank you for the many 'good gifts' we consider to be a part of our lives – friendship and family, the food that we eat, love and laughter – and so many more. Help us to remember that they come from you, the provider of all good things. May we treasure all these 'good gifts' and share them with others whenever we can. Amen	
Sending: Use a sentence that will remind children of the theme e.g. 'Let's go into today with grateful hearts.'	
Music used/sung: Hymn: 'Give thanks with a grateful heart' Or 'Thank you God for this new day' (with the refrain 'Alleluia, Praise the Lord') You could invent your own verses for this using some of the ideas you gathered.	
Evaluation:	

'God will provide' – a story about Jewish Sukkot

This is an 'all-together' story with actions for children to join in with, so you will need to teach them first:

When you say....children should...
'shelter' (or use the Jewish name, 'sukkah' if you prefer)	use their hands to shelter over their head
'complain'	say in a moany voice ' <i>moan, moan moan!</i> '
'Moses told them'	say 'GOD WILL PROVIDE'
'manna'	make 'rain' in front of them with their fingers
'quails'	flap little wings like a bird

The Jewish people had escaped from being slaves in Egypt, where they had been commanded to make bricks in the hot, hot sun for more years than anyone dared to remember. But God had freed them and now Moses, their leader, was guiding them through the desert from Egypt to the new land that God had promised them. It was the longest journey that any of them had ever been on. They had to take with them everything they owned, and they camped in a different place every night. So every night, before bed, they had to put up their shelters / sukkahs.....so that they had somewhere to sleep in the cool night air. For a while, they were happy to be free, and it was a big adventure, sleeping in their shelters / sukkahs....under the stars. But then,.... it started!.....

The Jewish people began to complain.....'*moan moan moan!*' ...about anything and everything! 'It's too hot!'..... 'My feet hurt!'..... 'Are we there yet?!' they complained....'*moan moan moan!*' and then finally - 'At least when we were in Egypt we had food to eat and plenty to drink!' they complained.... '*moan moan moan!*'

It went on for days. God heard what the people were saying and told Moses 'In the evenings, I will give my people meat to eat and in the mornings, I will provide bread for them.' So Moses went back to the people and told them.... "GOD WILL PROVIDE!"

That night, when the Jewish people had put up their shelters / sukkahs.....an enormous flock of quails..... landed. There were quails..... as far as their eyes could see! They all looked in complete astonishment at the sight, but Moses told them.... "GOD WILL PROVIDE!" to remind them that God had kept his promise and given them meat to eat! They all went to sleep happy that night!

In the morning, when the people came out of their shelters / sukkahs..... there was a strange, powdery substance which had fallen on the ground, almost as if there had been a frost that night. They called it 'manna'..... which means 'What is it?'

Once more, Moses told them..... "GOD WILL PROVIDE!" and commanded them to taste it. When they tasted it, it was as delicious and as filling as bread, and each person collected enough to keep them from being hungry for the whole day. If anyone tried to collect more manna.....than they needed, by the next morning, it had gone bad. Once more, Moses told them..... "GOD WILL PROVIDE!.... He will send you what you need each day, so you don't need to store it up!'

And so, every day, the people collected the manna..... all except for one day in every week – Shabbat. Shabbat is a special day for Jews because God told them to rest on that day and do no work. That meant no cooking – and no collecting! No manna.....fell on that day, so God provided twice as much the day before Shabbat, enough for two days so they didn't go hungry. And it didn't go bad either!!

The Jewish people travelled in the desert, living in shelters / sukkahs.... for 40 years until they reached the land that God had promised them. And each day, God would provide quails.....in the morning, and manna.... in the evening.

Today, Jewish people will still tell this story and remember what happened as their ancestors travelled the long journey through the desert, but especially what Moses told them..... "GOD WILL PROVIDE!"

Date: 8 th June 2011	Group of Children: Whole School
Timing: 10.10-10.25	Led by: Jane Whittington
Aim(s): To consider how their attitude to others' efforts can be unhelpful. To understand that sometimes a slow and steady approach can be best. To apply this to the context of sports week.	
Resources needed: Book of Aesop's fables Pictures of a tortoise and a hare Whistle Bell	
Content of worship:	
Gathering: use a greeting that children are familiar with e.g. say or sign Leader: Come everyone! Clap your hands! Response: Shout to God with joyful praise!	
Engaging: Talk about sports week and some of the things that the children will be trying. Introduce the creatures a tortoise and a hare, show pictures. Tell / act out the story. Discuss how the hare's boasting might have made the tortoise feel. Discuss why slow and steady won the race. How might our attitudes to others make them feel? This week show patience and support for each other as we try new sports.	
Responding: Reflection / Prayer: Children to think about times when they have hurt others by their attitude. Invite them to join in with the response prayer on screen Dear God When we have to wait for our turn Help us to be kind. When we win a race or a game, Help us to be kind. When someone is finding things difficult. Help us to be kind. Amen	
Sending: Use a sentence that will remind children of the theme e.g. 'As we go through today, let's encourage each other and build one another up.'	
Music used/sung: Hymn 'A wiggly waggly worm.' Or 'Every word you say' (Fischy Music) CD to play: Chariots of fire	
Evaluation:	

Date: 27 th May 2013 (60 years since Everest ascent)	Group of Children: Juniors
Timing: 10.10-10.25	Led by: Rachel Boxer
<p>Aim(s): To think about the importance of trust To think about the people and things that we say we trust – and reflect on which things are ‘trustworthy’ To reflect on the fact that God can be completely trusted (Psalm 25:1)</p>	
<p>Resources needed: A small rucksack containing some rock-climbing props e.g. helmet & harness A climbing rope and several carabiners: tie knots into the rope at intervals so the carabiners can hang easily Cards with things people say they trust e.g. friends, teachers, money etc., some good things, some not as trustworthy. Punch holes in these so they are easy to hang on the carabiners. Put all these props in the bag. Photos of Tenzing and Hillary in the Everest ascent, climbing together</p>	
<p>Content of worship:</p> <p>Gathering: use a greeting that children are familiar with e.g. say or sign Leader: God is good! Response: Praise Him!</p> <p>Engaging: Has anyone ever done anything like this? [show picture of Everest climbing] Climbers like this often work with a partner – but it’s not just a case of co-operation between them, they have to be able to completely trust that their climbing partner will support them (literally at times!) and watch out for them. Climbers are roped to their partner and will usually take it in turns to move up a rock-face, one of them climbing, the other having the rope securely fastened into the rock using bolts and carabiners like these [show them on the rope]. At times, their life may literally depend on their partner. This element of TRUST helps to keep them safe.</p> <p>The people in the photos are Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, probably one of the most well-known climbing pairs in mountaineering history – and the first recorded pair to reach the top of Mount Everest, 60 years ago, in 1953. After the expedition, Hillary told the story of the time that Tenzing saved his life. Whilst descending an icefall, a chunk of the ice that Hillary was standing on broke away, and he plummeted into a deep crevasse (that’s a huge, very deep crack in the ice). Tenzing’s quick reactions – and strength, pulling on the rope that joined them – saved him from certain death. The trust that they developed on those mountain slopes was to develop into a life-long friendship between the two men. We’ve been thinking about how mountaineers ‘put their trust in’ their climbing partner. [Show bag] In my rucksack here, I have some different things that we might ‘put our trust’ in, to help us think more deeply now. As we add these things to our climbing rope here, think about each, and whether it’s something <i>you</i> put <i>your</i> trust in.....</p> <p>Jesus once told one of his most famous stories – about two builders. You might remember that one man built his house on the sand where there were fantastic views of the sea. The other builder chose to build his house high up on a rock. When a storm came and the rain lashed down, do you remember what happened to the two houses?..... That’s right! The first builder’s house collapsed because sand doesn’t provide a firm foundation for a structure as big as a house. The second builder’s house stood firm because he had chosen a good, firm foundation for his house, a rock that wouldn’t collapse when the storm came. Jesus explained that people’s lives have to be built in the same way, on things that will stand firm and not fail <i>us</i>. We need to choose carefully the things that we ‘put our trust’ in.</p>	

Christians believe that God is the firm foundation that their lives should be built on, that he can always be trusted [show verse] and that he will help them to make wise choices in life.

Responding: Reflection / Prayer:

.....think to yourself of the important things in *your* life – the things in which
you put your trust.....
.....maybe something we've already hung on our climbing rope.....
....think about the things that would make a strong foundation for your life....
...things that will last and not fade.....

Invite children to join you as you pray.

Prayer:

Dear God

Thank you for all the good things that we have in our lives. Help us to choose wisely the things in which we should put our trust.

Amen.

Sending: Use a sentence that will remind children of the theme e.g. 'As we go out today, let us trust in God.'

Music used/sung:

Song 'God is watching over you' (BBC – All About Our School)

Evaluation:

Appendix 6: Collective worship observation record

OBSERVATION RECORD

To assess the quality of a specific act of collective worship

Note: not every section of this form will apply to each act of worship

School:

Date: Time:

Groups Present: (e.g. whole school, department, year, single class)

Theme

Purpose and development

Is the purpose of this act of collective worship clear to everyone present?

Is the theme developed effectively?

Is it an integral part of the school day?

Spiritual dimension

Would this contribute to the spiritual development of individuals?

Are there opportunities for prayer/reflection/quiet? How are they used?

Integrity

Is there a sense of respect for the integrity of individuals?

Is there openness, or compulsion, in invitations to pray or sing?

Does the occasion engender ease or discomfort among the participants?

Atmosphere

Is there a sense of order on entering and leaving?

Are candles, flowers, a cross or other focus used?

Does the leader contribute to the atmosphere by attitude towards the pupils, language and tone?

Is there a distinction between the assembly and the act of worship?

Sound, Silence, Visual Art

Is there a right balance of music, speech and silence?

How great a part does non-verbal communication play?

Is any visual art / images used, or creative work by children shown and celebrated?

Are the words of songs or hymns appropriate for the pupils and the theme?

Is the use of live or recorded music appropriate?

Pupil/Student involvement

How wide is the age range?

Is the delivery appropriate for the age range, background, ability and age range of pupils?

Are the pupils engaged and well-motivated?

Staff

Are teachers present (how many?), or is this seen as non-contact time?

If present, what role do they play?

Are they involved, or spectators?

Parents, Governors, Visitors, Clergy

Are parents, governors or visitors represented?

If so, what role do they play?

Are links with the local church referred to?

If a visitor leads the worship:

Is there evidence of adequate briefing?

Is the visitor properly introduced?

Is the visitor's contribution appropriate in content?

Are the conceptual and linguistic levels suitable?

Does the visitor seem comfortable in their role?

Close

Has the timing been good?

Has this occasion clarified and affirmed the school's values?

Has it offered pupils and adults something to think about and take into the life of the school?

Impact

What was the impact of this worship on pupils?

How will this act of worship have an impact on the wider life of the school community?

What points for development are there?

1.

2.

Signed:

Adapted from Open the Door: Guidelines for Worship and the Inspection of Worship in Voluntary and Grant-Maintained Church Schools, published by the National Society/Oxford Diocesan Education Services: photocopied with permission.

Appendix 8: A Sample Collective Worship policy

Schools may use this example as a basis for their policy.

We recommend that aspects that change frequently such as the pattern of collective worship and themes are included as an appendix to avoid needing frequent governor ratification.

XXX School is a **Voluntary Aided / Controlled** Church of England Primary School and as such has a Christian tradition and ethos. Our collective worship reflects and reinforces the schools, vision aims and ethos **(put a reference to your vision aims and ethos in here)**. Our collective worship both implicitly, and explicitly, demonstrates our Christian values of **(list your values here)**

At **XXX school** we consider collective worship to be an important part of the school day. An opportunity to reflect and develop the school's distinctive Christian character but also an opportunity to contribute to the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of pupils and staff.

Aims of our acts of collective worship.

These are taken from the 2018 SIAMS framework, do change them if you wish.

We aim for our collective worship to

- a) Be a daily expression of our school's Christian vision.
- b) Be inclusive, invitational and inspiring for all pupils, staff and parents and visitors
- c) Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- d) Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- e) Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the Trinitarian nature of God and its language.
- f) Enable pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
- g) Encourage local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

Collective worship includes the educational opportunities for

(You could include Fundamental British Values, Rights Respecting schools or anything else you do here)

- a) the whole community to celebrate;
- b) sharing and experiencing differences;
- c) developing a culture of learning;
- d) building a sense of group identity;
- e) encouraging a sense of personal and social responsibility;
- f) a break from the busyness of life (for stillness and quiet);
- g) learning how to behave in a large social group;
- h) exploring feelings and emotions;
- i) learning how to perform in front of an audience;
- j) learning how to respond to a performance;
- k) making visible the school's leadership;
- l) developing inner awareness.

Legal Requirements

The law requires the Headteacher and Governing Body to provide a daily act of collective worship which is in line with the school's Trust Deed and Foundation. The school meets with requirement. This requirement is explained to all involved in the planning and delivery of acts of worship.

Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship and this is stated in the school prospectus and handbook. *NB. In a controlled school (or if they were first employed when the school was a controlled school), staff have the right to withdraw from the act of collective worship. In an aided school the staff are expected to attend the act of collective worship. This right TUPE's over if you are now an academy (only put this in if it applies to your school)*

It is intended that consultation will take place before formal requests are made to withdraw from acts of worship. In the case of parents or teachers contact needs to be made with the Headteacher. Guidance for new parents on non-participation in acts of Collective Worship is given in the school prospectus.

Planning of Collective Worship

See Appendix 1 for the organisation of collective worship for the current academic year.

The **XXX** (this may be a group, the CW leader, the HT with the vicar) plans the themes for the year / term and then creates a detailed half termly plan taking account of school activities, festivals and import events.

The person leading the collective worship is expected to plan their worship as carefully as they would a lesson. **(if you use a particular format mention it here, if you base the majority of your CW around a resources such as Roots and Fruits, Teachers Dozen etc, mention it here)**

Pupils are involved in planning and leading Collective Worship **by (include what your school does here)**

Class worship (if you have class worship rather than class led assemblies put some detail in here about how they are planned and organised)

Themes

- We take the themes of our Collective Worship from **XXX**. In addition each term the festivals and events of the Christian calendar are included. Local events such as XXX are included

See Appendix 2 for the themes for the current school year.

Visitors

We welcome visitors to our collective worship. Some visitors are invited to share their experiences, linked to the theme of the collective worship, other visitors present a whole collective worship on a theme requested by the Headteacher. We welcome **Rev XX** the **XXX** Team at least **XXX** a term.

Visitors should understand that in schools **E** is for **Education** not **Evangelism** and avoid proselytising. Attempts to persuade pupils to adopt a particular religious or non-religious belief are not appropriate. Visitors should not speak about raising money for any particular cause without the prior permission of the headteacher.

Governors

We welcome Governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

Monitoring, Review and Inspection

It is the role of the Governors to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship.

The content and brief self-evaluation by the person leading the worship are recorded in a folder, which is kept in **XXX**.

The **XXX (could be staff or pupil ethos or spirituality team, could be school council, or CW leader)** seeks feedback from the children and staff about collective worship every.... (how often?)

The School will also be inspected through Section 48 SIAMS inspection

Reviewed by XXX Committee – Date

Ratified by Full Governing Body – Date

To be reviewed – Date

Appendix 1 Organisation of Collective Worship for the academic year 20xx – 20xx
(Note this section will be individual to your school)

We hold a daily act of worship in our School, taking various forms:

The exact day that the style of worship takes place may vary depending on the activities in the school, and availability of visitors however this is the intended pattern for collective worship;

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday

Class assemblies

Each class presents two class assemblies in the academic year. We invite parents to watch their child participate in a class assembly.

Festival and celebrations in the church

In xxx school we celebrate

Harvest

Christmas

Mother's Day

Easter

Pentecost

The church's saints day?

Prayer Space

If your school has planned a prayer space for a few days or a week you may wish to include this in here.

Appendix 2 The Collective Worship themes for the current school year.
(Note this section will be individual to your school)