

Planning Your Leavers' Service Some Helpful Hints

Putting your service together

- Keep the service short, aiming for about half an hour.
- Involve the pupils and staff in planning the service.
- Involve the pupils and staff in taking part in the service, both in leading parts of the service and as a whole group.
- It can be helpful to invite someone who is involved with the new school(s) that the pupils will be joining to be part of the service. This could be a member of staff, chaplain, or older pupil. They could say a few words of welcome or do an activity in the service. The train ticket activity would work well if you are using our suggested *'The Journey'* script.
- The structure we suggest for collective worship 'Gather, Engage, Respond, Send' is a useful framework. You may wish to include music at each point in such a special service.
- Resources for the service are on the Diocese of Guildford website.

A note about worship in Church of England schools

Worship in a school community is different to worship in a church community because the pupils and staff come from a variety of faith and belief backgrounds. The content of the worship should enable them all to be able to participate with integrity, and 'opt out' of any elements that they feel uncomfortable with. The wording we have suggested should help with this.

This expectation from the Church of England Education Office about collective worship in church schools is a helpful guide for worship in all school contexts.

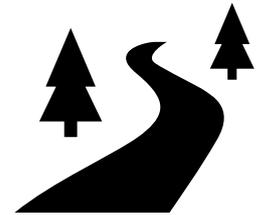
In church schools this collective worship is planned to be:

- **Inclusive:** something for pupils and teachers, of all faiths or of none to be able to join in with
- **Inspirational:** a time to think about the big questions in our lives; an occasion that supports the school community's spiritual development, creates an opportunity to gather around and reflect on a common theme and 'feeds' their inner being;
- **Invitational:** in school, children and teachers are invited to pray, think, or reflect, it is the child's or teacher's choice how they respond.

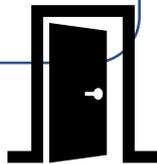
Parents can ask that their child is excused from attending collective worship; however, it would be sad for an individual pupil to miss out on this collective experience. **We hope that schools and church leaders will be able to adapt our material to make it as inclusive as possible for the pupils in each school. You know your own context best.**

Planning the Service Journey

The four stages through collective worship also work well in a leavers' service.



1. Gather – Your words of welcome to the service then something to bring you all together.
This could be a response that the pupils have written together.



2. Engage – This is the main content of your service. You need something to hook the pupils into the main message and then your Bible content. If you use our suggested reflective activities, they link into our suggested script '*The Journey*'. They also link into the 'Possible order of service' on the website.



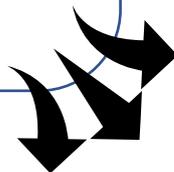
3. Respond – An invitation to reflect or pray. This could be led by the pupils or adults or both.
In a school service, pupils should be invited to pray and offered the option to reflect or think quietly instead.



4. Send - What message will the children take away with them?

It could be a:

- response
- challenge
- thought
- Bible verse or picture from the story
- At a leavers service, it's good to end with a sending out song



Music

Music is an important part of school life. The service will be enhanced by having music as the pupils arrive in the worship space and settle and as they leave the service. This could be a commercial recording, provided by the pupils live, or a recording of the pupils playing or singing. If you are in your parish church, it makes the experience even more special if there is organ music! This may be the pupil's first experience of hearing an organ played in a church, even better if the organist can play tunes that the pupils know. 'Star Wars' often goes down well at the cathedral services!

Ask the pupils and staff which hymns and songs they would like to sing during the service, they will have favourites.

These songs have been written for use in Leavers' services.

One More Step Along the World I Go by Sydney Carter. There are resources for it on Worship Workshop [here](#).

The Future Machine by Samuel Holbird. Video link [here](#).

Every Step by Nick and Becky Drake. Video link [here](#).

Change and Grow- Out of the Ark. Link [here](#).

Leavers' Song – Out of the Ark. Link [here](#).

Out of the Ark have a selection of Leavers' Songs [here](#). You will need to buy the download if the school do not already have it.

You may like to include these videos of other children singing.

- ♪ Children from around the world singing *The Blessing* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uiWZXLsdE9w>
- ♪ There is a lovely *Makaton signed version of The Blessing* here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=va048-XxFTI>
- ♪ *Once I was in Year 1*, this fits with the journey idea. They suggest that you personalise it to fit your school. It's not got any faith content but could be part of a mix of music. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9i30MM0J0A>
- ♪ *One More Step Along the World I Go*. This version has some super images that fit with the words. The speed is too slow for the children to be able to sing along. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QhV1_y6vVY