



St. Peter's
Church of England Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Issue number	Author	Date written	Approved by Governing Body	Comments
1	Paul Griffiths	11.2.2023	13.3.2023	
2	Paul Griffiths	4.4.2025	28.4.2025	Updated vision. Updated liturgy wording for worship. Introduction of spirituality and No Outsiders materials.



Vision

LOVE, LEARN, SHINE.

Love

Love and a strong sense of belonging, are the foundation of our school community's life. We want everyone to know and feel they are nurtured, precious, unique and loved by God.

Learn

Children should be inspired to develop a lifelong love of learning; to empower them to explore new paths and make informed choices. We are ambitious that all children become, fluent confident learners, who seek out wisdom, knowledge and skills that guide, inspire and prepare them well for life in a diverse world.

Shine

Every person has something that only they can offer. Every member of our school community is continually encouraged to shine, as only they can, enabling themselves and others to flourish in the light and love of God.

"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out"

(John 1.5)

Our vision translates directly into this policy in that

LOVE

Children learn of God's love as best described in Corinthians

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Corinthians 13:4-8 4

LEARN

Through worship, children learn and explore Christian values through the teachings of the bible as well as stories from other cultures and faiths. They consider how these values can influence and impact on their lives and the lives of others helping to improve our world.

SHINE

Collective worship creates opportunity to celebrate diversity and uniqueness as well as the values of caring, understanding and compassion that all contribute to enabling us to **SHINE**. Through participation in and leadership of worship in its different forms (whole school and classroom based) children experience success and achievement.

Definitions

Worship can be defined as paying homage to (revering) that which is of worth ("Worth-ship.") Religious Worship is the acknowledgement of 'worth', which is attributable to a supreme being. Worth can also be registered in other people and in values and attitudes.

School Assembly is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself.

Corporate Worship is a gathering of a body ('corpus') of believers and pre-supposes a particular religious commitment.

Collective Worship is a gathering of a 'collection' of people of diverse, religious, agnostic and non-religious backgrounds and does not pre-suppose any particular religious commitment.

Collective Worship and Assembly are not one and the same thing. They are, in essence, different from each other, but in place they often overlap.

It is helpful to read this policy in conjunction with the annual week by week collective worship overview.

Rationale

Our daily act of collective worship is a special and distinctive time of our school day. Our school is an educational community not a faith community. Therefore, we do not celebrate corporate worship which assumes a group of believers but collective worship which means we gather together and provide the opportunity for worship to take place but do not assume participants will have any particular beliefs or are required to make a response.

We understand collective worship to be educationally valid and inclusive. Our school worship gives us the opportunity to look within and beyond ourselves, and some of us might encounter God. It is an occasion which allows space for worship to take place but also allows other responses from participants.

An act of worship is an important part of our whole curriculum, and empowers the children to be open to life, feelings, commitment, celebration, values and vision.

Legal Framework

- The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) requires:
- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal) must on "each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship." This is also the case in schools without a religious character.
- [Subsequent to the act; Registered pupils aged over 16 may exercise the right to withdraw for themselves]
- The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deed of the school and the Ethos Statement in the Instrument of Government or, where it is not stated within the Trust Deed, should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
- For Collective Worship, pupils can be grouped in various ways: as a whole school, according to age, or in groups (or a combination of groups) used by the school at other times. Pupils cannot be put into specific groups just for Collective Worship.
- The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises. Schools are, however, permitted to hold their acts of Collective Worship elsewhere, (e.g. the local parish church) on special occasions.
- The provisions of the 1988 Education Act concerning 'determination' (section 12) and 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' (section 7) do not apply to schools with a religious character.

- Responsibility for the oversight of Collective Worship rests with the governors in consultation with the headteacher. Foundation governors have a particular responsibility to ensure that the character or foundation of the school is reflected in Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship is not designated curriculum time under law and should not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum. The act of Collective Worship must be distinctive and identifiable if it is to meet the legal requirements. Since collective worship is not to be counted as curriculum time, PPA time should not include or overlap Collective Worship. Collective Worship time should not be used as 'intervention time' as this would result in pupils not receiving their legal entitlement to worship provision.

Parents' Right of Withdrawal

Parents have the legal right to withdraw children from worship, and parents are made aware of this right.

Staff Rights

All staff should be sympathetic to the aims of our Church School but may exercise their right to not fully participate in school worship.

Our Aims

From the Christian perspective of our foundation the aims of our school worship are:

- To be educationally worthwhile.
- To respect the integrity of all those who participate.
- To be inclusive, so all feel able to contribute and gain whatever their personal commitment.
- To be appropriate to the needs of the children.
- To contribute to R.E.
- To contribute to the spiritual development of the children.
- To reflect the Anglican foundation of the school.

Objectives

To give the opportunity:

- To give children a spiritual dimension to life and personal values.
- For a sense of group (class, key stage or school) identity, a community experience.
- To help children explore the language and nature of Christian worship.
- For a reflective pause in the busyness of our school day.
- To experience an atmosphere of specialness which is different from all other activities in the hall/school day.
- For others to join our school community.
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs in relation to others.

Worship should develop each persons understanding of themselves and the world around them, and may be;

- An individual response to God.
- An awareness of beauty and goodness.
- A sense of awe and wonder.
- Feelings of sorrow and regret.
- Praise or thanksgiving.
- Reflection or prayer.
- A celebration about things we care about/special occasions.
- Thinking together about things of concern.
- Sharing thoughts, ideas or class activities.
- Sharing experiences of living in and responding to the world around us.
- A deepening ability to be sensitive to sincerely held religious beliefs.
- About affirmation.

- An opportunity for participation.
- About worth.

The Headteacher is the Worship Leader

Role of Leader:

- To ensure the legal requirements are fulfilled.
- To co-ordinate the provision of a daily act of collective worship.
- Produce annual overview document including resources to support delivery
- Maintain information on the website relating worship
- To monitor and evaluate the perceptions and feelings of children and staff about the provision.
- To regularly evaluate the acts of worship in the school.
- To support staff and other providers.
- To organise and maintain resources for worship.
- To keep up to date on worship issues.

POLICY INTO PRACTICE

Acts of worship are:

- **Invitational** and therefore children are supported and encouraged to join the worship in its different forms but not expected to respond in any given way. Invitation language will be used such as 'I will say a prayer now. If you would like to make it your prayer you can say amen at the end'. In addition parents have the right to request their children do not attend worship.
- **Inspirational** are therefore children are interested and activity engaged directly during worship but can also describe impact 'beyond the hall'. Children are motivated to take actively engage with leading worship.
- **Inclusive** and therefore child centred, related to children's experiences, relevant to children's concerns, affirming, and involving the children as active participants. Acts of worship should foster a sense of community, shared values, identity and purpose. There should be no need for the right of withdrawal to be exercised. If participants integrity is being respected then any concerns that might be likely to prompt withdrawal should be avoided.
- **Educational** and therefore learning experiences of real quality. Acts of worship should be properly prepared, delivered, resourced and evaluated. There is no place for evangelism or indoctrination in a school act of worship. There is a partnership between the content and conduct of school worship and the ethos of our school.
- **Spiritual** and therefore a special time where an atmosphere conducive to worship is created. Attendees should feel relaxed, secure, comfortable and calm. Spiritual development can be fed through words, music, images and atmosphere. Opportunities will be created to participate in a variety of spiritual activities and space given for individual reflection and response. Children may find God through meaningful experiences not through "closing their eyes" or being forced to participate in a particular way.
- **Planning for Worship** Themes will be set annually for the year ahead. This planning will be flexible enough to allow for sudden events, disasters, celebrations, and sadnesses and joys in our community to be acknowledged.

Organisation of Collective Worship

All children should take part in an act of worship each day. Opportunities for worship will be organised to follow a typical weekly cycle. This is reviewed annually. An example of a typical weekly cycle is provided below.

Day	Time	Worship Type	Lead by
Monday	EY & KS2 - 2.55 Class worship – No Outsiders	Classes	Class teacher/children
	KS1 – Key Stage worship with Headteacher	Key Stage 1	PG
Tuesday	EY & KS1 - 2.55 Class worship – No Outsiders	Classes	Class teacher/children
	KS2 – Key Stage worship with Headteacher.	Key Stage 2	PG
Wednesday	2.50 Whole School	Whole School	Alan Garrow / Chris Clayton or St Peter’s Church representative
Thursday	2.55 Class worship – Spirituality Focus	Class	Class teacher/children
Friday	2.55 EY and KS1 – Upper Hall	Celebration Worship	HT/AHT
	2.35 KS2 – Lower Hall	Key Stage Phases (EY & KS1 and KS2)	

On special occasions our Act of Worship will be held off the school premises typically at St Peter’s Church or St Paul’s Church. This is typically at least 4 times a year; Harvest, Christmas, Easter and end of year (leavers service). There may also be additional church workshops for special events.

Timing

Worship will typically be 15 minutes in length, this may vary to suit, age of children, setting, special occasions.

Planning

What is the theme?

What is your aim?

Will there be a focus for the children?

How will you introduce the idea?

Outline the delivery? Is it relatable to the children’s world?

Are hymns or songs appropriate?

Will there be a time for prayer, reflection, directed thoughts?

Which approaches will you use?

How will you conclude your worship?

What resources do you need?

Do participants need to be prepared?

Is a particular seating arrangement more appropriate than others?

Can you identify the worship elements/Christian elements?

Evaluation

Leaders, including governors, will evaluate their acts of worship. Children and other participants will be included in the evaluation of our school Acts of Worship. Governors will routinely support the evaluation of worship also as part of the annual monitoring and evaluation schedule.

Children

Children shouldn't be pressurised to believe. The leader should try to create an occasion for children to respond to the ideas presented on several levels. Worship is one level at which response is possible. Children should have the choice to opt in.

The integrity of children and staff should be maintained. Some will have no explicit awareness of religious beliefs and responses; some may have a personal commitment to a particular faith.

Skills which can be developed

Listening sharing making choices communicating respecting others understanding others analysing reflecting using silence growing in knowledge and understanding of self/growing in knowledge and understanding of worship.

Teacher's Role

Acts of Worship are essentially shared experiences for our school community. Teachers should normally be part of that experience, to help the children get the most out of the experience, i.e. teachers will be able to respond to children's later questions or comments. Teachers attitudes to acts of worship affect the atmosphere of assembly and the value children attach to the activity (i.e. teachers as participants or as disinterested spectators). Teachers' presence can help support those leading the Act of Worship. Teachers should ensure children leave for the hall/classroom with the right attitude. All teachers should assist in leading acts of worship.

Preparation for the Hall/Room

Physical surroundings are important in creating the right atmosphere for school Acts of Worship. The use of a focal point/worship cloth can help in the creation of "a special place" feeling. Children may sit in a square or circle or a horseshoe shape or anywhere. The usual arrangement is for children to sit in class rows. Children can help to organise screen/music/door closing when all are assembled.

Focal Point

A table will typically provide a focal point. Typically, on the table there will be a cross, the bible and candle as per the typical introduction see appendix A. Other focus points could be: flowers, candle, object, picture, slide, phrase, symbols or sculpture.

Approaches to Worship

Within the Christian faith, various denominations encompass a rich variety of experiences and practices in relation to worship. Presentation/expression of worship may include:

story drama/mime candles prayer flowers religious readings
artefacts video songs/hymns music tape/ed dance/movement
meditation art creative silences poetry use of senses natural materials
sharing food reflection children's experiences dialogue/discussion celebration of festivals aspects of school curriculum/work/activities

The material to be used should be carefully chosen. Children should be introduced to the means of worship, without being expected to worship in a committed way. Different forms of presentation, style, format and content should be included.

Elements of Worship

which can be experienced.

reverence	symbol	hope	suffering
concern	wonder	grief	praise
forgiveness	fellowship	silence	fear
duty	ritual	love	responsibility
sense of mystery			

Story

The use of story is a powerful tool and may be perceived at different levels by those involved. Story can:

- Raise awareness
- Set a scene outside the realm of children's experiences
- Increase children's understanding of themselves
- Enlarge their perspectives on the world
- Increase empathy
- Increase knowledge and understanding of nature of faith
- Demonstrate joys and difficulties of life children have not experienced
- Provide insights into the lives of others
- Pose moral questions
- Develop language and listening skills

Stories can be:

historical	dramatic	biblical
values based	biographical	country based
folk tales	seasonal	fictional
environmental	Christian	anniversary based
news based	contemporary	musical
allegorical	multicultural	other world faiths

Prayer/Reflection/Directed Silence

Children should be invited to listen or to think about prayer. "Now in a moment of stillness the chance to pray or think for a while". It is important not to exclude anyone, prayer should be an opportunity for reflection, response or communication. Prayers should be appropriate, may be expressed by the children, may be silent, may be musical.

Music

Adds an extra dimension to worship and helps to create an appropriate atmosphere. Music will be changed regularly and be illustrated on a hall board. Music helps the children to be involved, children can respond physically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually. There are many books of hymns/songs. We mainly use "Come and Praise 1 and 2". These include contemporary and traditional Christian hymns suitable for children.

Multifaith Worship

The content could be enriched by using material from different cultural and religious traditions. Our Acts of Worship are inclusive and educational, we would therefore value each of our children whatever religious group and would wish to acknowledge and share their experiences, attitudes and beliefs. Using multi-faith material will help the children to recognise and respect, reflect on and respond to the multi-faith society in which we live. We do not offer other faiths acts of worship, but may share in aspects of other faiths which do not contradict Christianity.

Resources

A wide variety of resources are available to support the delivery of worship. The worship co-ordinator can direct staff to these. In addition to the resources in each school there is list of useful links and wider reading including in the appendices to this policy.

Evaluation Questions to Consider

Preparation:

Was the purpose of the Act of Worship clear to all?

Was the theme developed effectively?

Were the artefacts/visual aids etc. of good quality?

Were the artefacts/visual aids able to be seen?

Spiritual Development:

Would this Act of Worship contribute to the spiritual development of those taking part?

Were the opportunities for prayer/reflection/quiet, effective?

Integrity:

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

Was there openness or compulsion in invitation taken to pray or sing?

Did the participants feel at ease or feel discomfort?

Atmosphere:

Was there a sense of order on entry and leaving?

Was the focus appropriate?

Was the recorded music appropriate?

Participation:

Was there opportunity for participation?

Was the delivery appropriate for ages, ability of children?

Staff/Visitors:

Were they present?

What part did they play?

Close:

Was the timing good?

Did the children/adults gain something?

Additional forms of evaluation including – pupil interviews, pupil and parent feedback comments sheets collated in evaluation books, staff discussion and review with governors.

Appendix A –

Worship Rhythm – *Provides a recognisable rhythm for children ensuring worship time is distinct and different to the rest of the school day. Can be used in whole school worship and classroom worship.*

Marking the Start of Worship – Welcoming

Appropriate music will be used to welcome children and set a reflective and welcoming tone.

Worship leader(s) say

Good morning/afternoon everyone.

Everyone replies with

Good morning/afternoon (name of worship leader) and signs also.

Worship leader(s) light a candle and say

'Jesus said 'I am the light of the world'

Everyone replies

'Help us Love, help us learn, help us light up our world'

Worship leader(s) say

'The Lord is here. Welcome to our collective worship which I will lead today.

Leading Prayer

Worship leader(s) say

'Prayer is a quiet and special time when people talk to God. I am going to say a prayer. If you would like to make it your prayer you can join in and say Amen at the end.

Marking the end of worship.

Worship Leader says

'Jesus loves and cares for everyone. Peace and love be with you.

Everyone replies

'And also with you'

Worship leader(s) will blow out the candle or choose a child to do this and say;

'Go in peace to shine and share your light'.

Appropriate music will be used to ensure a calm, quiet and reflective exit from worship.

Appendix B – Template structure for pupils leading worship

Current Theme (see annual planner) –
Introduction Good afternoon. My name is..... or Our names are.....and we will be leading our worship this afternoon. Reference parts of the Worship Rhythm document
Consideration <i>Can you remember a time when..... This is a way to engage the audience and make the content/ theme relevant to them and encourage them to relate it to their lives. For example can you remember a time when you had to forgive someone? Can you remember a time when you were treated unfairly? Can you remember a time when you had to work together with someone?</i>
Story or Reading <i>Share a story or reading that helps to explain or give an example of the theme. This could be read, told, acted out. Pictures or clips can be used.</i>
Reflection & Prayer Provide some quiet time to sit and reflect and think. I am going to say a prayer now. If you would like to make it your prayer you can say amen at the end if you would like.

Appendix C – Links & Useful resources

Values for Life and Roots and Fruits resources available in school



The Diocese Guidelines relating to collective worship in schools can be accessed at - <https://www.leeds.anglican.org/education/collective-worship/diocesan-guidelines>

Further information regarding Open the Book can be found at <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/>

COOLING, M. (2008) More Assemblies for Autumn, Spring, Summer Term
pub. RMEP

HALL, S et al Flippin' Praise - Consortium in Anglia for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
(Dioceses of Ely, Norwich, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich)

HARTMAN, B (2015) Telling the Bible pub. Lion/Hudson

HARTMAN, B (2013) The Storyteller Bible pub. Lion/Hudson

HARTMAN, B (2015) Telling the Gospel pub. Lion/Hudson

HARTMAN, B (2013) Bible Stories Through the Year pub. Lion/Hudson

NICHOLLS, R (2007) The Year in colour – Primary Assemblies for Christian Festivals and Seasons pub.
Kevin Mayhew

PARKINSON, R (2016) 10-MINUTE Assemblies for 4-11s – 50 ready-to-use assemblies exploring values
from the Christian perspective pub. for Barnabas in Schools by The Bible Reading Fellowship

PRITCHARD HOUSTON, M (2013) There is a Season – celebrating the church year with children pub.
SPCK

VICKERY, S et al (2006) Values for Life pub. Jumping Fish

Reflective areas

CHAMBERS, L (2008) Creative Ideas for Quiet Corners pub. Barnabas / BRF

READER T & WEATHERALL L (2009) Reflective Learning pub. Barnabas/BRF

Background Reading

BRISTOW, R (2012) Prayer in Schools pub. Grove Books

Appendix D – Collective Worship Evaluation formats

We are also currently developing online versions of review forms for individual acts of worship and also the end of half term block.

i) Collective Worship -- Pupil Voice Review

Date of the Collective Worship being reviewed _____

Who was the worship for? Whole School / Year Group / Form

What was the theme of the worship?

What happened during the worship?

E.g. story, prayer, singing, PowerPoint, visitor, drama, who took part?

What was the worship like?

E.g. quiet, fun, noisy, lots to join in with, time to think etc.

Which face best describes how you enjoyed worship today?

Would you have changed anything in this worship today?

This worship was reviewed by _____

Collective Worship Observation Checklist Other Adults

Date of worship observed _____

Worship delivered by _____

Role _____

Theme _____

Age range of pupils

Delivered to Whole school

☐☐

Group (please specify)

Quality of material / content

Relevance of material to recipients

Engagement with pupils / staff

Inclusivity

Distinctiveness (ethos) /
Anglican tradition

Quality of delivery

Clarity of opening and ending

Was there opportunity to worship / reflect?

Was it clearly collective worship rather than assembly?

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Other comments

Appendix E – Collective Worship Class Worship Structure Ideas

Class Worship Rhythm Ideas

Welcoming - Sit together	Think of a way the children could sit that encourages community and 'togetherness'. This could be on the floor in a circle (including adult), a semi-circle, square, round a table etc. <i>Informality encourages openness and indicates to the children that this is not a lesson.</i>
Light candle	Light a candle to signify the start of your worship time together. <i>This makes it feel like 'an event' and children will associate the flames/smell of the candle with a special time.</i>
Focus discussion & reflection	<u>This could be:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use of thought of the day- a picture with a deeper meaning (e.g. a storm – discuss the 'storms of life' and what they do when they find life difficult; does this remind you of a story in the bible?)- a philosophical question (e.g. how many times should you forgive someone? Is there a limit?)- a bible verse or bible story- a short story with a message relating to the Christian values
Prayer/ponder pebbles	Give each child a glass pebble to hold. Take 2 or 3 minutes to ponder or pray in their heads (this can be done in silence or while listening to some calm music). After a few minutes, ask children to share what they have prayed/thought about.
Say a prayer/blessing together	Choose a prayer or blessing to say together (see overleaf).
Symbolise the end of worship time	Choose a child to blow out the candle to signify the end of your worship time together.

Class worship should be led by the class teacher. If PPA is on class worship day the timing of class worship should be moved to the part of the day the class teacher is present in class.

Collective worship time should have a clear structure so it is consistent across the school. In time, children should be encouraged to lead this time of worship themselves.