



Collective Worship

Adopted 10/11

Revised and adopted 06/14

Updated 2018

INTRODUCTION

When worship is good, it is very good; when it is terrible it can be very bad indeed! Many of us will have mixed experiences of worship at school, as children, young people, parents, grandparents, teachers, governors and clergy. We want our worship to be faithful to the Creeds and traditions and heritage of the Church, meaningful and inclusive.

1. THE LEGAL BASIS FOR SCHOOL WORSHIP

- a. Arrangements for collective worship in a church school are the responsibility of the governors in consultation with the headteacher.
- b. Foundation Governors have a particular responsibility to ensure that the worship meets the requirements of the Trustees.

2. There are three main legal requirements for collective worship:

- a. Collective worship in a Church of England School should be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England.
- b. The law on collective worship in a community school, that it *should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character* **does not apply** in a church school, where it should be **clearly Christian**.
- c. As the foundation of the school is in the Catholic Tradition of the Church of England, we expect that tradition to influence our approach and forms of collective worship.

3. The school must provide an act of collective worship for **all** children every day

- a. There is a provision to opt out of worship and a meaningful alternative should be arranged
- b. Collective worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class unit.
- c. Whilst we wish to make worship as inclusive to all who attend our school and desire that none feel the need to withdraw from it
 - i. parents may withdraw their children from collective worship on religious grounds.
 - ii. The 'religious grounds' do not have to be justified or explained by parents.
 - iii. This does not mean that schools can guarantee an exemption from the Christian ethos of the school as this ethos determines its distinctive approaches.
- d. Should children be withdrawn, the school must provide adequate supervision to ensure their safety.
- e. Staff are not allowed to withdraw children from collective worship for other activities (e.g. remedial reading, music lessons, booster classes, etc).

4. Staff Withdrawal

- a. Whilst teachers in local authority schools may withdraw from Collective Worship, teachers in voluntary aided schools have a condition of employment which requires their participation in the daily act of collective worship (they may also be required to lead worship in the forms as directed by the school)
- b. Collective worship **cannot** be used as part of a teacher's planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time.

5. DEFINITIONS OF WORSHIP



- a. **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, we call God.
- b. In Church of England schools, opportunities should be provided for children to offer worship to God, through Jesus Christ.
- c. We can never *make* anyone worship because it is an attitude of the heart focused on God; in a school situation we should seek to lead people to the threshold of worship by providing a setting where they may worship God if they so wish.

6. School Assembly

- a. is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself might be without religious content although one would expect Christian Values to permeate its content.

7. Corporate Worship

- a. is a gathering of a body ('corpus') of believers and presupposes a particular religious commitment.
- b. When the school, or groups within a school, meet together for worship the activity is unlikely to be corporate worship, where the worshippers are broadly in agreement in their beliefs.
- c. Even in a school where the background of the children is Christian, the children may not regard themselves as believers.

8. Collective worship

- a. is a gathering of a 'collection' of people of diverse religious, agnostic and non-religious backgrounds and does not presuppose any particular religious commitment.
- b. In our context it refers to a service of worship which is educational and inclusive in its nature, rather than being a gathering of believers. Opportunities should be provided for children to offer worship to God, through Jesus Christ, without losing sight of either the different starting points of each of the children, or the need for the act of collective worship to take account of the developmental ages of the children.

Collective worship and assembly are not one and the same thing. They are, in essence, different from each other, but in practice they often overlap.

9. MULTI-CULTURAL AND MULTI-FAITH ISSUES

We live in a multi-cultural area and particular care must be taken to ensure that the integrity of all children and their families is respected and that children are prepared to enter a multicultural and multifaith society.

- a. Acts of worship may include materials from faiths other than Christianity, when these materials are relevant, and especially when children from those faiths are present, but at all times worship must be offered to God through Jesus Christ.
- b. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from school on the occasion of religious festivals.
- c. Muslim parents may wish their children to celebrate the two major Muslim religious festivals; Id-ul-Fitr and the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, and Id-ul-Adha, some ten weeks later. They may wish to have a day away from school for each festival. Jewish parents may wish their children to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and Hindu parents may wish their children to celebrate Divali.
- d. As Church of England schools we seek the approach whereby we:



- i. Nurture those of Christian faith
- ii. Support those of other faiths
- iii. Challenge those with none

10. THE AIMS OF SCHOOL WORSHIP

- a. By virtue of their foundation, worship in church schools should be of the highest quality and the central activity in the life of the school.
- b. It is important to be sure that the aims of school worship are stated very clearly in order for everyone involved in the school community to be clear about what the school is trying to achieve in order to be able to monitor the provision and evaluate its effectiveness.
- c. The following aims are loosely based on the current 'Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools' (SIAS) inspection criteria and what is considered to constitute 'outstanding' worship in schools.

i. **School worship should aim to:**

1. enable children and staff to explore and celebrate the differences and diversity found in the variety of forms of worship in the Anglican Christian tradition;
2. lead the school community to the 'threshold of worship' in order for them to make an informed choice about their own involvement and to consider their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ;
3. seek to deepen and widen the experience of those of 'faith' and encourage those of 'no faith' so that they begin to feel for themselves something of what it means to worship;
4. use celebration, silence, stilling, reflection, contemplation, meditation, prayer, song, symbols and imagery as vehicles for worship and spiritual growth;
5. provide opportunities for the whole school community to address God directly through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit through acknowledging his presence, reflecting upon his character and giving Him praise and honour;
6. use a vocabulary of worship that encourages the whole school community to attend, participate and lead worship
7. encourage all present to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework by learning more about the Christian faith and by encountering Christ through worship;
8. raise awareness through reflection of the ultimate questions of life relating to matters of faith;
9. reaffirm, strengthen and practise key Christian values. (e.g. love, peace, compassion, forgiveness, self giving) and celebrate each unique individual member of the school community as made in the image of God;



10. nurture and encourage respect and care for God's created world by promoting a positive attitude to environmental issues locally, nationally and globally;
11. seek to provide opportunities for spiritual, social and moral development that is characterised by feelings such as awe, wonder, being uplifted, elation, appreciation, gratitude, respect, and reverence;
12. develop a sense of community within the school, the locality, (e.g. local church) and foster the sense of being part of a wider community through the celebration of achievements, festivals and special occasions;
13. foster a concern for the needs of others, being sensitive to the diversity of opinion within the Church of England

11. THE ANGLICAN TRADITION

In all Church of England schools worship should reflect some of the essential features found within the diverse and rich traditions of Anglican prayer and worship.

- a. When planning collective worship, our school will draw on the rich history and identity of our parish church which is in the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

12. Encouraging links with the worship of the local parish church

- a. We will ensure a strong relationship between our school and our foundation church
- b. At Christ the Saviour the central feature of our worship is found in the two weekly school masses at which pupils will: serve, read, intercede and act as vergers
- c. The Anglican Church is a worldwide church with a strong commitment to ecumenism, so Church of England schools should also feel free to draw upon appropriate materials from other Christian churches in their collective worship.

13. Common Worship

In the Church of England, those who lead worship are bound to use only those forms of service that are authorized or allowed by the Church of England's canon law. The school will ordinarily use the worship services of the foundation church.

- a. The Church of England has two different but complementary sets of services:
 - i. the 1662 Book of Common Prayer
 - ii. Common Worship.
- b. Common Worship supplements the Book of Common Prayer with services and prayers in diverse styles. Most of the material is in contemporary language, but some of the services are based on those in the Book of Common Prayer, incorporating adaptations and additions that have become customary over the years. More information can be found on the Church of England's website at www.cofe.anglican.org/worship.
- c. Some parishes also use the Roman Catholic Liturgy, such as Christ the Saviour Church.

14. A very clear form and shape is commended by the Church for simple acts of worship:

- a. **Preparation** (a greeting, confession, praise and a collect or prayer for the day)
- b. **Liturgy of the Word** (hearing and exploring the words of the Bible)
- c. **Prayers** (thanksgiving and prayers for those in need and the Lord's Prayer)



- d. **Conclusion** (dismissal)
15. Common Worship (or the online Universalis website used by the parish) can become an appropriate resource for collective worship in schools, as it offers source material for Greetings and opening sentences; Responses; Prayers; Introductions to Bible readings; Dismissals and Blessings. It also provides a simple outline for teachers to use when planning worship and if used as a format the outline for worship might look like this:
- Greeting Psalm or Song of Praise**
 - Short Bible story-read, enacted, read together etc**
 - Prayer & Lord's Prayer**
 - Song**
 - Grace/Final blessing**
16. Common worship texts can be found at www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts and many of these can be used in collective worship.
17. Universalis texts (as used at the weekly mass) can be found at: www.universalis.com
18. **HOLY COMMUNION (also known as the Eucharist, Mass or the Lord's Supper)**
- It is appropriate that children in Church schools have some understanding of Holy Communion and experience worship which includes this sacrament. Holy Communion was given to us by Jesus at the Last Supper when he shared the Passover meal with his disciples.
 - Through this celebration, Christians seek to follow Jesus' command "Do this in remembrance of me." They remember all that he has done for us: the broken bread and wine represent his crucified body and blood and proclaim that by his death, Jesus won forgiveness and eternal life for all who believe in him.
 - There are very careful rules governing the celebration of Holy Communion and a form giving permission to receive at mass is provided on the School's website.
 - The school has a weekly mass in the infant school and a weekly mass for junior-aged pupils in our parish church.

1.7 DISTINCTIVE CHURCH SCHOOL WORSHIP

There are many elements which contribute towards outstanding school worship and demonstrate clear church school distinctiveness whilst reflecting the broad spectrum of the Anglican tradition. Some of these elements will also be present in non-church schools.

Distinctive and outstanding worship will include opportunities for those participating to:

A. Gain understanding of Anglican worship and the Christian faith through:

- ❖ using the Bible in worship as a source book of knowledge, inspiration and prayer
- ❖ learning about the important and famous prayers of Christianity, (e.g. Lord's Prayer) and other appropriate traditional responses, collects, hymns, and psalms;
- ❖ using prayers from Common Worship (the Church's Prayer Book) where appropriate
- ❖ experiencing different forms of Christian worship and worship material and where appropriate learning how to use church service books;
- ❖ exploring Christian beliefs about God and the nature of God as revealed in Jesus;
- ❖ looking at significant aspects of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus;



- ❖ sharing with and making links with local church life and Christian practice;
- ❖ celebrating the major festivals, significant days in the churches year and other major saints' days (e.g. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost);
- ❖ giving opportunity to reflect upon Christian symbols and their use in worship (e.g. bread, wine, paten, chalice, cross);
- ❖ recognising the central significance of the Eucharist.

B. Develop spiritually and morally through:

- ❖ experiencing what worship is and what people do when they worship;
- ❖ understanding the acceptance of life as given (e.g. the leader of the collective worship generates a positive outlook by making clear that everybody in the school is there to be accepted and loved);
- ❖ fostering the ability to meditate and use silence creatively thereby fostering a sense of the transcendent (e.g. moments of quiet and reflection to think about yourself in relation to others, the universe and what God might mean to you);
- ❖ reflecting on and thinking more deeply about important issues (e.g. by looking at the sense of mystery and wonder using natural objects, pictures or slides children can be encouraged to reflect on how such a complex world came into being);
- ❖ fostering a sense of awe and wonder at creation, the awareness of the infinite and of an individual's position within it (e.g. children might look at slides or pictures of galaxies stars etc. with some statistics which show the vastness of the universe and the smallness of people);
- ❖ celebrating all that is of value in life – truth, love, goodness, beauty, self-giving etc;
- ❖ celebrating personal fulfilment and the life of those who have given service to others, (e.g. by celebrating the achievements and successes of children, staff and the community);
- ❖ reflecting on the acknowledgement of moral and social demands, (e.g. in their relationships with others, making it clear that behaviour such as bullying, telling lies or stealing are not acceptable)
- ❖ exploring the mystery and the important questions about life and creation, including the dark side of life, e.g. suffering, loss, death and evil
- ❖ expressing their concerns, hopes, joys, etc;
- ❖ building up their relationship with God and a sense of personal belief;
- ❖ developing a concern for the created world and for all life; e.g. children may be challenged with environmental issues and their responsibilities for animals and the world
- ❖ appreciating the values and beliefs by which other people live;
- ❖ acknowledging and becoming more aware of the needs of others and contributing towards their plight (e.g. through a focus on a particular charity).

C. Celebrate the life of the school and wider community in the presence of God through:

- ❖ experiencing members of the local church and other churches leading worship within school or in local Christian places of worship (e.g. celebrations, Mass, etc);
- ❖ providing children and all staff with opportunities for developing presentation and performance skills through their involvement in school worship;
- ❖ learning the skill of group and choral singing or public speaking and reading;
- ❖ developing children's ability to sing, write and produce their own music
- ❖ participating in group planning, preparation and presentation;
- ❖ celebrating all types of work undertaken by children in all areas of the curriculum;
- ❖ reflecting on the values of the school - often using Christian Values for Schools by the National Society;



- ❖ sharing in all the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the school and local community, e.g. welcoming new children to schools, school leavers' service in the summer term;
- ❖ taking note of events in the wider world, celebrating and giving thanks, expressing joy or sorrow as appropriate.

D. Explore, understand and empathise with the beliefs of others through:

- ❖ sharing in a commitment to welcome children of all faiths to school acts of worship
- ❖ listening to stories from other faiths and learning about their significance to the Christian faith where appropriate;
- ❖ discovering how believers from other Christian denominations and other faiths worship; celebrating values and attitudes shared with members of other faith communities (e.g. love).

1.8 THE CHILDREN'S VOICE

What's been said:

What we think:

Throughout these guidelines, we have stressed the importance of the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship. It is vitally important that in every stage of this process the children's voices are heard.

Good worship happens where children are active participants, not passive spectators and this includes being involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation. In this way, the Act of collective worship becomes their own, rather than something that is 'done to them'.

Children will be taught how to participate fully in collective worship and how to pray and foster devotion at Mass.

Jesus

'I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.'

The National Society In outstanding church schools: 'Learners clearly articulate the importance of worship and the key Christian values that the school promotes.'

'Worship involves high levels of participation and a very positive response from those attending.' 'Acts of worship are evaluated by all the stakeholders.'

Ofsted

1.9 THE ROLE OF THE COLLECTIVE WORSHIP CO-ORDINATOR

As with every area of school life, it is important that the teacher responsible for coordinating collective worship has a job description.

Here is an example of areas which could be included in the job description:
draft/update the school's policy for collective worship in consultation with the headteacher, staff and governors; ensure that all staff are aware of and use the policy document; review the policy on a regular basis; plan an overall balanced programme of worship for the year;
include colleagues, children and visitors (including the incumbent/curate) as worship leaders;
ensure that collective worship is provided in line with the school's aims and policy;
advise on planning, ideas and resources for collective worship in all its forms; provide and collate worship planning and record sheets;
order and maintain resources, and encourage their use during collective worship;



administer the budget for collective worship;
ensure that collective worship maintains a high profile in the school development plan,
and to write action plans as appropriate;
monitor and evaluate, with others, collective worship in all its forms at least annually and update as appropriate the school self-evaluation documentation;
report as appropriate to the headteacher and governors;
ensure that collective worship maintains a high visual profile in the school – e.g. through displays of themes/resources/artefacts in the hall and school entrance;
keep up-to-date with recent publications, attend Diocesan courses and then disseminate information to colleagues;
provide INSET for colleagues;
liaise with the incumbent, governing body, Diocese and SIAS inspector on matters relating to collective worship.

1.10 A POLICY FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship Policy Statement

Introduction

This policy has been prepared by the Parish Priest, governors and headteacher.

The right of withdrawal.

The parents' legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship is clearly laid out in the school prospectus. If there are any children whose parents exercise their right to withdraw them from worship alternative activities will be provided in consultation with the children's parents. This does not mean that the children will be in any way exempt from the Christian ethos of the school which underpins the whole of school life. Parents are made fully aware of the Christian character and anglo-Catholic emphasis of the parish church when they enrol their children at the school.

Aims and Objectives

We we always seek to reflect in our worship the Christian foundation of the school and its care for all who work here.

Children are helped to understand the meaning of Christian worship and we hope that believers will be able to share in it and that others of no faith will reach the 'threshold of worship'.

Our central aims of collective worship are to:

- enable children and staff to explore and worship together in a way which complements the liturgical richness of the church's year and parish church's distinctive catholic identity
- lead the school community to the 'threshold of worship' in order for them to make an informed choice about their own involvement and to consider their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- seek to deepen and widen the experience of those of 'faith' and encourage those of 'no faith' so that they begin to feel for themselves something of what it means to worship.
- use celebration, silence, stilling, reflection, contemplation, meditation, prayer, song, symbols and imagery as vehicles for worship and spiritual growth.
- provide opportunities for the whole school community to address God directly through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit through acknowledging his presence, reflecting upon his character and giving Him praise and honour.
- use a vocabulary of worship that encourages the whole school community to attend, participate and lead worship.
- encourage all present to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework by learning more about the Christian faith and by encountering Christ through worship.



- raise awareness through reflection of the ultimate questions of life relating to matters of faith.
- reaffirm, strengthen and practise key Christian values. (e.g. love, peace, compassion, forgiveness, self giving) and celebrate each unique individual member of the school community as made in the image of God.
- nurture and encourage respect and care for God's created world by promoting a positive attitude to environmental issues locally, nationally and globally.
- seek to provide opportunities for spiritual, social and moral development that is characterised by feelings such as awe, wonder, being uplifted, elation, appreciation, gratitude, respect, and reverence.
- develop a sense of community within the school, the locality, (e.g. with Christ the Saviour and other local churches) and foster the sense of being part of a wider community through the celebration of achievements, festivals and special occasions.
- foster a concern for the needs of others.

In summary within our daily act of collective worship, we aim to provide opportunities for children to:

- provide an opportunity for children to worship God; develop special programmes of participation for those who wish to serve at the altar
- celebrate all that is good and beautiful and express thankfulness for the joy of being alive;
- develop liturgical awareness and a great appreciation for the mass
- * provide opportunities for children to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the darker side of life such as sorrow and disappointment;
- ensure that the experiences provided are relevant to the age, aptitude and family background of the children;
- give time for silent reflection and exploration of inner space;
- illustrate forms of worship that others have found helpful in their spiritual development, e.g. silent contemplation and singing;
- provide a rich variety of forms of expression, e.g. art, drama, music, story and give children the opportunity to experience these at their own level rather than teachers imposing their own interpretations;
- take place in an environment that is conducive to worship, which is professionally coordinated and properly resourced;
- always invite, never coerce, remembering that children will be at different stages of spiritual development and that they should feel able to respond and participate at their own level.

Monitoring and evaluation are part of a whole school cycle of self review and this will be achieved over time by asking all stakeholders to reflect on school worship.

Monitoring

Monitoring of collective worship will be carried out jointly by the headteacher and the parish priest.

Useful strategies for collecting the evidence will include:

- written observations; checking that practice matches planning
- observing children's attentiveness and level of interest
- conducting occasional formal observations of collective worship and providing feedback
- seeking feedback from children, staff, parents, governors, incumbent and visitors
- observing the extent of the collective worship's influence on children's attitudes and behaviour throughout the school
- holding regular discussions with colleagues
- gathering written comments from colleagues on the worship planning sheet



Feedback will be brought to staff meetings which will review collective worship which will be held regularly.

Evaluation The information gathered via one or more of the strategies listed above will be analysed carefully in order to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the collective worship.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The headteacher and foundation governor(s), including the incumbent, will be the main evaluators.

Formal evaluation of collective worship will take place at **least annually** as detailed in the school improvement plan and collective worship action plan.

Review

The headteacher, governors and staff will review this policy every *three* years. A worship planning and record sheet is kept weekly to ensure that acts of worship are generally compatible with the requirements of the policy and to inform our learning and planning for further developments. These will regularly include any formal and informal evaluations of acts of collective worship which will assist monitoring, future planning and delivery. Visitors outside the school community who are regularly involved in acts of worship are provided with a copy of the collective worship policy.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

A daily act of collective worship is held for all children regardless of their background of culture or religion. Every effort is made by the school to involve all children unless withdrawn by their parents in accordance with the law.

Responsibilities

It is the ultimate responsibility of the head and governing body of a school to ensure a daily act of collective worship takes place.

Conclusion

At Christ the Saviour collective worship is highly valued and every effort is made to ensure that all children and staff take an active part in a high quality daily act of collective worship. Worship may contain many elements but at we seek to specifically ensure that the act of collective worship is a learning experience as well as a spiritual encounter.