



The John Wesley Church of England and Methodist Aided Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of love, koinonia, compassion, service, wisdom and forgiveness and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England and Methodist churches, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

2. WHAT IS COLLECTIVE WORSHIP?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

"... Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)

Corporate worship assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

Collective worship, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.

Collective Worship should be:

"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes."
(DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)

Collective Worship gives pupils and school staff the opportunity to:

- Engage in an act of community
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar

In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship:

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- Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
- 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
- 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
- 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
- Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship

3. THE ANGLICAN & METHODIST CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Learning and saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- Using Psalms with simple responses – Taizé style

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship

4. IMPLEMENTATION

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including staff, pupils, the incumbent of our local Anglican and local Methodist church and external visitors including Captain Graham from The Church Army in consultation with the collective worship leader. This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day, in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using planning guidance from Canterbury Diocesan Collective Worship Planning and in conversation with our Methodist and Anglican clergy which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our school community. Each week, we have a new theme for our collective worship. The themes include our Christian Values and a range of other ideas relevant to our children's experiences. Our themes can also be responsive to what is happening in the wider world. There is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity. Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies. This includes discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for

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the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

We meet every morning at 8.55am either as a whole school, Key Stage or we will have Collective Worship in our classes. We start most days with our collective worship as we believe it sets the tone for the rest of the school day and puts our Christian ethos at the very heart of what we do and who we are. Teachers and children are present and it is a special time for the school community. During 2021-22 year, due to Covid-19 protocols, many of our whole school workshops may have to be led remotely when numbers of outbreaks are high in the school. This is reviewed on a termly basis.

Worship usually follows the following pattern:

On Mondays, we meet together as a whole school community. This is led by the Headteacher or in her absence, another member of the Leadership Team. This can be face to face or remotely in 2021-22.

On Tuesdays, our class teachers lead class worship, introducing the theme for the week through bible stories and prayer but in a more specifically class and age-related way.

On Wednesdays, the whole school joins together once again for Choral/ Praise and Reflection Worship. As an Anglican and Methodist school, worship through singing is very important to us and the weekly theme is explored through hymns and prayer. This is led by Music Leader and Senior Leaders. This can be face to face or remotely in 2021-22.

On a Thursday, we gather as a whole school again. During this time, we have Reverend Helen Hollands or Reverend Cathie Aldis-Saunders or another visiting speaker join us from our local Methodist and Anglican churches. This can be face to face or remotely in 2021-22.

On a Friday morning, we celebration all that has happened during the week as a whole school. We sing Happy Birthday, share schools news and certificates are awarded for learning, friendship and for demonstrating our Christian Values.

During all of our daily collective worship sessions, we either say together our school prayer, the Lord's prayer or reflect on John Wesley's Rule. Our children are regularly involved in leading different aspects of our worship including lighting the candle, singing, prayer and opportunities for quiet reflection. Each week, a class writes a prayer for the week that is read daily in worship.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT.

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- **Gather** – we welcome the community, for example, (with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle)
- **Engage** – we share, for example, (a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message)
- **Respond** – pupils, for example, (discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing)

- **Send** – we share, for example, (the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle)

5. EXPECTATIONS OF PUPILS

Pupils are given opportunities to plan and lead worship on a voluntary basis. They work with the collective worship leader during lunchtimes to develop their own understanding of worship and to design a worship to support the spiritual development of their peers.

6. DEVELOPING WORSHIP

The school allocates part of its budget to support the daily act of collect worship. The collective worship leader attends regular professional development with Canterbury Diocese and accesses a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.

7. SELF-ASSESSMENT AND INSPECTION

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop.

We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils through our suggestion boxes and questionnaires, which are reviewed and considered on a regular basis. These are shared during full governing body meetings and play an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school. Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury (SIAMS).

8. THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN VOLUNTARY AIDED AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- The Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher (*DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53*)
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship'

9. PARENTAL WITHDRAWAL

Worship is regarded as special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a church school. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none. We respect the right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents.