



St John's

Church of England

Academy

Collective Worship Policy

Reviewed	October 2021
Adopted	October 2021
Review due date	October 2024

St John's Church of England Academy

Collective Worship Policy

Collective worship at St John's Church of England Academy takes place daily in accordance with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The contents of all our acts of worship are in accordance with the aims of the academy's Trust Deeds. Collective worship reflects the distinctive Christian ethos of St John's.

What is Collective Worship?

Christian worship is an honouring of God. It acknowledges His transcendence and Holiness, His "worth" and "value"; it is a loving response to His nature as revealed in Jesus Christ. Worship stems from personal experience; it is a central characteristic of faith communities which are in relationship with God.

We can never make anyone worship because it is an attitude of the heart focused on God; we can lead people to the threshold of worship by providing a setting where they may worship God if they so wish.

In collective worship children and adults will be responding in different ways at different levels; some will be passive observers, learning about worship but not participating in it; some will be "at the threshold", interested in the process and participating in it but not full believers; for others the act of worship may be a time of real worship of God.

It is the task of collective worship to provide a setting in which the integrity of those present is compromised but in which everyone finds something positive for themselves.

This policy has been prepared by the governors and Headteacher.

Introduction

Our Collective Worship Policy strengthens and supports the distinctive Christian character of our school, re-affirms our Christian values and celebrates the contributions that each child makes to our community. Worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England as well as other Christian traditions. The daily act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors.

Values for Life

Our Christian values are at the heart of our academy; staff, governors, parent representatives and children worked together to discuss which values are important for our community and how we could embed them in our daily living and learning

together. The **six key values** we chose to focus on were: love, forgiveness, peace, truthfulness, respect, and courage. Other agreed values that support our ethos are: hope, compassion, patience, tolerance, thankfulness and justice.

Our core values underpin our daily life and are implicit in our mission statement:

‘Guided by God, to be the best that we can be.’

Our school aims help us to achieve our mission and strategic vision. We intend to:

- Create a safe, happy and caring learning environment, where everyone is welcomed and valued as a unique individual within the eyes of God and each other.
- Provide an exciting broad, balanced and meaningful curriculum, which offers all pupils the widest range of educational opportunities in order to inspire a love of learning and prepare them for the next phase in their education and life in the 21st century.
- Create a culture based around Colossians 3:23 ‘Work with all your heart as if working for the Lord..’ so everyone is inspired to, ‘Be the best that you can be’
- Raise individual self- esteem and resilience through praise, independence and risk taking so children are not afraid to make mistakes and become confident, active learners.
- Encourage pupils to develop spiritually, mentally, physically, culturally and morally into well balanced, reliable British citizens who take responsibility for themselves, their school environment and the wider world.
- Ensure that we celebrate diversity and encourage children to respect and embrace differences providing equal opportunities are provided for all.
- Work in effective partnerships with families, feeder schools, governors, the church and other agencies, to ensure that every child matters and achieves their true potential.
- Commit to excellence for all and through the process of continual reflection and evaluation, constantly strive to improve.

Aims of collective worship

We hope to provide pupils with the opportunity to:

- Explore a relationship with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Reflect on our explicit Christian values.
- Develop personal spirituality.
- Be engaged in an exploration of the relevance and application of the Christian faith.
- Develop an enquiring mind and express and explore their own views openly and honestly.

- Develop a community spirit and a common ethos.
- Foster an awareness of the world around them and their place within it.
- Celebrate gifts, talents and achievements.

Organisation of collective worship

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school. This may be a whole school as Key Stage or individual class.

The general pattern for daily worship is as follows although we are flexible:

Day and Time	Worship	Worship Leader
Monday 9.05 – 9.25 am	Whole School	Headteacher or Deputy
Tuesday 9.05 – 9.25 am	Whole School	Headteacher or Deputy
Wednesday 9.05-9.25am	Whole School Praise (singing)	Headteacher (Music Lead)
Thursday (time to be decided by class teacher in light of timetable)	Class Worship	Class Teacher
Friday 9.05-9.30 am	Whole School Celebration with families- presentation of awards, certificates, house points etc.	Headteacher or Deputy

In addition to the above **we hold:**

- **Class Assemblies in the Spring and Summer terms where** class teachers and children celebrate their learning with families and friends.
- **Key Christian festivals** (Harvest, Christingle and Easter) take place in St John's Parish Church, led by staff, children and members of clergy together. Families are invited to join us. They are usually on a Thursday afternoon at 2pm.
- **Foundation Governor Worship** Foundation Governors occasionally lead Collective Worship, including Rev. Shirley from the Salvation Army.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

The Headteacher and Deputy Head plan, monitor and evaluate acts of collective worship, supported by the Reverend and Foundation Governors when required.

The themes for our acts of worship were chosen by all members of the teaching staff and revolve around a two year programme. The themes are from Christian traditions

and events of the Christian calendar. The themes reflect and build on topics that we teach as part of the school curriculum. We plan our worship as part of a series of themes with a strong focus on one of our Christian Values every half term. However, they are flexible to allow the inclusion of current issues or events.

The content of all acts of collective worship is considered carefully, to ensure relevance and suitability for the ages, aptitudes and backgrounds of all pupils. Weekly records and evaluation of worship are saved to the school system.

The Act of Collective Worship

A variety of teaching and learning styles and active and interactive methods are appropriate in acts of collective worship. A variety of resources are used including ICT. Leaders choose the style/method and resources, which are appropriate to the content, age, aptitude and the background of the pupils. The content and process must be sufficiently stimulating in order to evoke a response in the individual through reflection and prayer.

Anglican Christian Tradition

The following may be described as shared Christian elements of collective worship:

- Using the Bible, either as a source of knowledge or inspiration for themes and stories
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saint's Days
- Learning and saying prayers particularly The Lord's Prayer and the Grace
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to rap
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning e.g. cross, bread, wine, candles, colours of the church year
- Using Psalms with simple responses e.g. The Lord is here/His spirit is with us, Peace be with you/and also with you, Go in peace to love and serve the Lord/In the name of Christ, Amen
- Learning about Christians celebrating the Eucharist and experiencing it
- Encouraging links with the worship of the local Parish Church

Time of year and Christian festivals	Colours of Worship Cloth
June, July, August, September, October, November (ordinary time)	Green
December (Advent)	Purple
December/January Christmas & Epiphany)	White/gold
January/February (ordinary time)	Green (ordinary time)
March (Lent)	Purple
April, May (Easter to Pentecost)	White/gold

There is a distinctive, clear form and shape to our worship:

- **Gathering/greeting:** Walking in music, lighting the candle, 'The Lord is with us.' Hymn.
- **Engagement:** Short bible story read/acted, time to explore/explain words of songs/hymns.
- **Response:** Time for reflection & prayer.
- **Send:** Leave in a spirit of song/praise, blessing which encourages the school community to take action in the world.

Setting the scene:

A table may be covered with a cloth to match the colour of the Church calendar. We begin each act of worship by using reflection items to remind us of each person of the Trinity:

- The Bible, God's word, helps us to think about God the father.
- The cross helps us to think about God the son, Jesus Christ.
- The candle helps us to think about the Holy Spirit, God's presence around us. The candle is lit prior to the opening response to signal the start of worship.

Song and Music:

Song and music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere, unifying and uplifting the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. We select our songs and music carefully to match the value/theme of the worship. Music is played when children are walking in and out of the hall to focus their thoughts and set a calm atmosphere.

Each week, we have a Praise Worship, during which we take time to carefully consider the words of the songs and create a worshipful experience by our reflection and responses to the words and music. We aim to provide the opportunity for children to listen to a wide variety of music as they arrive and leave the hall for worship.

Opening and Closing Responses:

In line with the Church of England tradition, Collective Worship begins and ends with an opening and closing response. There are responses for each term and these are displayed in the hall to enable all leaders to use the appropriate response. However, staff are free to use alternatives where appropriate

Reflection and Prayer

We feel that prayer is an effective way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to our prayers, which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire. For example, 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well-known Christian prayer...' 'I am now going to say a prayer. If you agree with my prayer, then you can join in with Amen at the end.' In this way, we are able to use prayers from many different traditions if we deem appropriate. In addition to a prayer, we include the use of silence to provide an opportunity for pupils to respond in their own personal way if they wish. We offer the children the chance to reflect by posing a question for them to think about, relating to the theme of the worship, during a short period of silence. We invite the children to either look at the floor or close their eyes to avoid distraction.

If announcements are to be given at the same time as an act of worship then they will be of a positive nature, which at times may enhance the act of worship itself. Announcements will be made preceding the act of worship with a clearly defined break between them and the act of worship e.g. a change of personnel, lighting/extinguishing the candle etc.)

Children's Input in Worship

Children from Year 6 lead the opening and closing responses and lead prayers. In addition, Year 6 children are responsible for setting up the hall for worship. Year 6 children take an active role in all the church services during the year, by leading the prayers and taking the readings. Church services are planned to enable the children to be actively involved; for the Harvest service, each class will present an aspect of the theme through poetry, dance, singing or drama.

Pupil led assemblies take place each term. A Worship group (Y5/6) plan and lead half termly whole school worship although all children are encouraged to lead all or parts of worship as they mature.

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach, which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. Anyone invited to lead our collective worship is made aware of our policy by which they are expected to abide, and unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the theme for the week. Guidance for visitors is to be found in Appendix 1.

Parental/Community Involvement

Our parents, carers and grandparents are regularly invited to join us for acts of collective worship. This includes personal invitations to weekly Celebration Worship (Friday), where their child has been singled out for some special recognition. This promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children. They are also invited to main Christian celebrations at St John's Church (Harvest, Christingle and Easter) and termly (spring and summer) Class Worship where individual classes lead worship and give a celebration of their learning. There is an open invitation to Eucharist celebrations. We welcome governors' attendance at worship at any time and at times they are invited to present special awards.

Pupils of other faiths

As a church school, which includes some pupils from other faith traditions, the beliefs and values of those pupils are also recognised.

Right of withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship, although by sending their children to a Church of England Academy, we would hope that parents would understand that collective worship is central to the ethos of our school. The head teacher would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this issue with parents who are considering withdrawal. Any children who are withdrawn will be cared for but no other work will be set for them.

Special Educational Needs

Children with special educational needs will be given appropriate support to enable them to take part in the act of worship e.g. seating position, use of head phones.

Resources

A range of books are available in the staff room and Headteacher's office. Frequently used online material includes:

www.assemblies.org.uk

www.canterburydiocese.org/childrenand schools/collectiveworship

www.barnabusinschools.org.uk

www.spinnaker.org.uk

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher is the Collective Worship Lead with the assistance of the Deputy Head and members of the Governing Body. They use feedback gathered from pupils, staff, parents and visitors to review Collective Worship and assess its impact - areas for development are included in the School Development Plan. We use this information to complete the SIAMs self-evaluation forms.

Strategies used to collect evidence include:

1. Collective worship record sheets have a section, which requires the worship leader to evaluate the quality of the worship. We consider whether acts of worship have been successful by evaluating against some of the following:
 - Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils;
 - Growth of respect and tolerance within the school community;
 - Good order;
 - Enrichment of pupils' experiences;
 - Positive responses to shared experience
 - A contribution to individual and community sense of well being
 - An atmosphere which matches the theme
2. Feedback from individual pupils who have completed Collective Worship slips voluntarily.
3. Feedback from individual classes (annually)
4. Feedback from pupil surveys (annually)
5. Feedback from staff and observations as to how collective worship impacts on pupil behaviour around attitudes around school.
6. Formal observation and informal observations of collective worship by governors.

Policy reviewed by Headteacher, Deputy Head and shared with staff/Governors December 2021.

Appendix 1

Inviting Visitors to lead Collective Worship

We welcome visitors to lead worship but please make sure they know:

- Who will attend, whether it is whole school or Key Stage
- What the school's aims, ethos and policies are
- How long the speaker is expected to talk (10 to 12 minutes)
- The current theme/Christian value and context for the speaker with what has already been covered
- How pupils and staff are normally involved
- What resources are available to them
- Exactly how much their contribution will be – just the talk or leading the prayer
- Please remember to give visitors plenty of notice
- Invite them to attend an act of collective worship beforehand so that they may see how the school conducts them, or, if this is not possible, provide them with a copy of the Collective Worship policy
- Some visitors may need to be told that collective worship is not an appropriate vehicle for hard sell evangelism, and that inclusive language e'g' 'We believe that...' is to be avoided.
- Visitors who are regularly involved in collective worship should appreciate sensitive feedback on the appropriateness of their contribution to the worship programme.

Never leave a visiting speaker to take an act of collective worship alone