

Collective Worship Policy

Introduction

At St. Mary's CE VA Primary School Collective Worship is central to the life and purposes of the school and is fundamental to the development of its Christian foundation, vision, values and ethos. The Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for establishing policy in consultation with the governing body. Policy and practice is informed by the Trust Deed and Ethos Statement of the school.

Collective worship provides a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story, the mutual giving and receiving of worth as well as times of reflection and prayer. At its best, collective worship is inspirational and transformational.

The Church school is a community which is inspired by the Christian understanding of God as Trinity. God the Father, the source of all being and life; God the Son, who reveals God's love by his life, death and resurrection; and God the Holy Spirit, who makes Christ known in the world. The fundamental part that worship plays in the life of the school requires that it is given the highest priority and there is an expectation that *all* members of the community (children and all staff) will be present other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

Legal Framework

The school has a statutory duty to ensure there is a daily act of worship for all pupils that takes account of their age and aptitude.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship and the school will make suitable arrangements to accommodate these children. However, as collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the school, there is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet the head teacher to discuss their concerns and requirements.

The Governors of St Mary's CE VA Primary School have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact worship has on the school community in consultation with the Headteacher.

Aims

Collective Worship at St. Mary's CE VA Primary School aims to:

- provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to respond to the presence, power and peace of God.
- evoke a sense of beauty, awe, wonder.

- enable children to become familiar with the Bible and grow in their appreciation that for Christians it is God's word.
- provide opportunities for reflection, participation, challenge and enjoyment where all present can be actively involved and develop their own spirituality.
- help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well known Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.
- offer opportunities to all children and staff to develop their skills in planning, leading and evaluating the impact of school worship.
- strengthen and support the school community, giving expression to, and reaffirming, the core Christian values which underpin the school's vision, policies, curriculum and moral code.
- develop a sense of self-worth and celebrate the gifts that each child and adult brings to the school community, recognising the uniqueness of each individual made in the image of God
- reflect on the puzzling questions that life poses and learn to appreciate the significance of mystery i.e. that we can't understand and explain everything
- foster a concern for others within the school community and wider world.
- deepen appreciation of the gift of the natural world and the importance of acting responsibly toward the environment
- encourage respect of other people's religious beliefs and practices.

Organisation

- Collective Worship at St. Mary's CE VA Primary School is held on a daily basis.
- Worship normally happens at the end of the day when the school comes together with the exception of Thursday when it is held at 9am. Worship normally lasts for 15 to 20 minutes.
- Worship is usually led by the Headteacher or member of the SLT on Monday, The vicar or member of the Church community on Tuesday, a member of staff on Wednesdays, the 'Open the Book' team on Thursdays and the Headteacher or member of SLT or children on Fridays.
- The school meets all together for Collective worship every day except for Wednesdays when worship is held in separate Key Stages or classes.
- Collective Worship is planned by the Collective Worship leader and the Vicar and follows a Christian Value each term.
- Planning is shared with SLT and the Open the Book team who fit their Bible stories into the planning.
- All members of the school community are expected to attend worship.
- At the start of Collective Worship the candle is lit, a Bible is displayed and the altar table has a cloth linked to the liturgical colours of the seasons of the Church year.
- As the children lead in and out of worship, music is played which links to the Christian Value being explored.
- Children are given opportunities for reflection within the worship and
- Collective Worship starts with the lines: 'We have gathered together in the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit to think about the Christian Value of

- Major Christian festivals and cycles of the church year and addressed through Collective Worship.
- There is a balance of Bible Stories and children's own life experiences as well as stories with a moral theme. We also use power-points, websites, drama, puppets, art work, music and film clips to engage the children in Collective Worship as much as possible.
- Children are encouraged to participate through talk partners or volunteering to come to the front and help.
- The school provides guidance to visitors to the school who are leading worship on the procedures and expectations.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of Collective Worship at St. Mary's CE VA Primary School is monitored through the following ways:

- Pupil Questionnaires
- Governor monitoring visits
- Ethos Committee monitoring visits

Outcomes from monitoring visits are then discussed at the Ethos Committee and recommendations for further development feed into the SIAMS action plan.