

St George's  
Church of England Primary School

Children are a Gift from God



# Collective Worship Policy

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## Introduction

During Collective worship at St George's Church of England Primary School, the staff and Local Academy Board seek to develop body, mind, soul and spirit in a Christian context whilst also seeking to support and encourage children to affirm or develop their own beliefs, values and attitudes. This links with our school mission and ethos statements, which say:

*At St George's Church of England Primary School, we offer an exceptional educational experience founded on Christian values. We welcome children from all faiths and no faith and seek to inspire in them a love of learning, a passion to fulfil their potential and a commitment to serve the community.'*

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We therefore aim to provide a happy, caring, safe and stimulating school where everyone is valued and respected and there is a high level of expectation in all aspects of school life. We actively encourage partnerships with parents, local academy board members, the church and the local community.

Through these aims we hope that children will become active and responsible members of society.

We want our children to ...

- Be able to use initiative
- Be self-reliant
- Have respect for themselves and others
- Be responsible
- Show through their behaviour that they caring for one another
- Have a sense of their own worth

... so that they can grow into happy and successful young people.

We want our children to learn to cope with the changing world and to develop an appreciation of their own cultures.

We want them to learn moral and spiritual values with a Christian ethos.

And above all we aim to encourage an enthusiasm for learning that lasts a life time.

Our school aim is to learn to love God and one another by:

- Encouraging a positive, lively and enquiring attitude towards learning
- Providing pupils with activities and experiences which will enable them to develop in as many ways as possible
- Helping pupils develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and for others, and to be able to consider another point of view or belief
- Encouraging pupils to feel proud of their achievements and those of their fellow pupils
- Ensuring that pupils, parents and staff feel secure, confident and valued by the whole school community

'Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England in partnership with the church at parish and diocesan level. The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils'.

A growing number of our pupils at St George's Church of England Primary School come from a faith other than Christianity and although we give priority to our Anglican church background and traditions, it is important that we are inclusive and that the integrity of all those taking part is respected. Within a Christian framework, the collective worship will, from time to time, reflect the religious traditions of children within the school as the act of collective worship is a major channel for developing, confirming and clarifying the communities spiritual and cultural identities.

## Policy Aims

As Collective Worship is central to life of the school, it is our aim to promote spirituality through a variety of experiences that are enjoyable while being educational, thoughtful and contemplative. We aim to:

- Give pupils active experience of being part of a caring Christian community.
- A time to celebrate the belonging to God and to consider the spiritual dimension of life.
- A quality time when children are helped to come to terms with their deepest thoughts and questions.
- A time set apart from the rest of the day and in an appropriate atmosphere where pupils' personal response and ideas are supported.
- A means whereby pupils can begin to and continue to understand the language and nature of worship – opportunities for prayer, thanksgiving, celebration, confession, repentance and forgiveness.
- Show a concern for others in our school community, beyond our school and in the wider world.
- A learning experience with the opportunity for celebration or quiet reflection where children can consider wider issues than their own lives and experience.
- Enable pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder at the world god created.
- A time to foster a respect for the world and all its' people.
- An opportunity to learn more about one's self and to enter into other peoples experiences.
- A coming together of the whole school family where we can emerge from and feed all aspects of school life.
- A time to sue material from a range of cultures and beliefs as well as those that are Christian.
- A time to celebrate Christian festivals.

## The Nature of Worship

Worship is an activity. A practical matter directed towards God but is not necessarily a simple matter of words and singing. True worship is an inner response. It cannot be forced. It comes from within and is a response to an experience of beauty or sadness or music or a situation. There is neither one correct way in which to worship nor only one way in which to respond.

Collective Worship should:

'aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, through listening to and enjoying in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes' (Circ.1/94, para50 Scripture union).

Worship at St George's Church of England Primary School is mainly Christian in nature whilst being appropriate to all. It offers a rich and varied experience which might involve any of the following: particular Anglican features including reflecting the cycle of the Anglican year, exploring the Bible, particular prayers and hymns, meditation and silence, being still in the presence of the Lord, expression in a variety of ways of God's majesty and glory, contemplation, awe and wonder, listening and thinking.

In so doing we hope to create an atmosphere in which pupils are invited rather than compelled to explore issues for themselves, reflect upon and learn from their own experiences and the experiences of others, develop sensitivity and a sense of wonder, awe and mystery for the world of which they are part.

## Equal Opportunities

Our school worship is therefore about sharing what is meaningful and significant in our lives. It is about sharing our common concerns and responsibilities and developing positive attitudes and values. It is about affirming the equality of each individual in God's sight, whatever a child's gender, ethnicity, physical or mental ability.

## Organisation of Collective Worship

In addition to the national legal requirement that there should be daily worship, as a church school, we have a Trust Deed which states that worship should be 'in accordance with the principles and practices of the Church of England' and in accordance with the School Ethos Statement in the statutory Instrument of Government. Collective Worship takes place every day for all pupils.

Worship is organised on a whole school basis. They can be led by staff, visitors and the pupils themselves.

One of the ways our school fulfils its Christian character is by inviting clergy and Christian workers into school to lead worship and take part in the children's religious education classes.

We can assure parents, however, that our school exerts no pressure on children to become worshipping Christians or to take part in any activity that will compromise their own family faith or beliefs. The spiritual, social, cultural and moral welfare of all pupils whatever their background is of prime concern to us as a school. However, Christian values are definitely built into our ethos and teaching and are reflected in the themes on which our daily acts of worship are based. We also incorporate the Jigsaw (PSHE) themes into collective worship.

All Collective Worship is timetabled and planned and is held in the morning straight after registration.

All staff and pupils are expected to take part in Collective Worship, a position Local Academy Board members actively encourage, though a right to withdraw exists. A record sheet showing details of the theme, resources and strategies used is completed on a weekly basis.

Each assembly includes music on arrival and departure and a hymn or song. The music is selected according to the theme. The music includes many classical pieces of music, film sound tracks, festival music and world music. Hymns are generally chosen from the Come and Praise hymn book which is supplemented by a repertoire of additional hymns learnt from a range of other sources.

The weekly timetable for worship is as follows:

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| Monday    | Worship led by the Senior Leadership Team on the theme of the week.                                |
| Tuesday   | Worship through song.  |
| Wednesday | Worship led by the clergy.   |
| Thursday  | Cass worship based on the weekly theme   |
| Friday    | Celebration assembly, worship led by the Senior Leadership Team and parents are invited to attend. |

As we are an Anglican school we reflect aspects of Anglican worship in the following ways:

- We use the Bible as a source of Christian teaching, and give it a prominent place in our worship.
- We follow the cycle of the Anglican year; Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost and some saints' days.
- We use liturgical colours for our worship focus.
- We use Christian symbols and artefacts, exploring their meaning for Christians
- Our worship follows a liturgical pattern gathering, engaging, responding and sending.
- Using Anglican sentences and responses (eg The Lord be with you ... and also with you).

### The planning of Collective Worship

Each half-term there is a theme for collective worship based on Christian values for the school. The themes chosen are broad enough to allow all those leading worship to approach the theme from their own perspective. This will mean that by the end of the week the pupils will have had the opportunity to reflect on the theme from a variety of viewpoints.

Alternatively, class teachers may develop their worship from themes and events that occur on the curriculum during the week. On occasions it is recognised that those leading worship may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.



All those leading collective worship are asked to plan their act of worship in as much detail as they would any other learning activity.

## Children's Contribution to Collective Worship

Children are encouraged to take part in collective worship in a number of ways:

- Setting up for collective worship.
- Taking part during collective worship.
- Leading collective worship.
- Being consulted for their views about themes and hymns.
- Writing prayers and placing them on the school Prayer boxes in their class worship display.

## Parent Partnership

Good relationships, understanding and partnership with parents and the local community are signs of a successful school. Therefore, parents, religious communities, headteachers and governors are encouraged to discuss worship in school, just as they would discuss any other important aspect of school life.

Parents are welcome to attend when worship takes place at St George's Church. When a class leads worship, their parents are invited to share in the worship. In addition, parents take a full part in Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Leaving Services.

## Community Links

St George's Church of England Primary School has close links with the Diocese, St George's Church, Birmingham City Mission, Christian Aid, OXFAM and the Karis Neighbourhood Project. All of whom are regularly welcome to lead school acts of collective worship on a regular basis.

From time to time charity appeals are arranged in the school which may form the basis for worship focused on the work of a particular local or national charity.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Evaluation strategies used by staff for assessing the outcomes of Collective Worship are:

- Observation of the children's attentiveness and level of interest shown during the sessions.
- Feedback from pupils.
- Feedback from staff.
- Parents' comments.
- Children's general behaviour in and around school and to one another.
- Children's attitudes moving to and from Collective Worship.
- Completion of Collective Worship records by the worship council.