

Christ Church CoE Primary School

School Policy Document



Collective Worship POLICY

Date Written revised by HT	AUGUST 2022
Date Approved by Full Governing Body	Autumn 2022
Date of Next Review	Summer 2025

Christ Church CoE Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

This policy was formulated to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

The Governing Body recognises its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. This policy will ensure equality and fairness regardless of race, sex (gender), sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, disability or age.

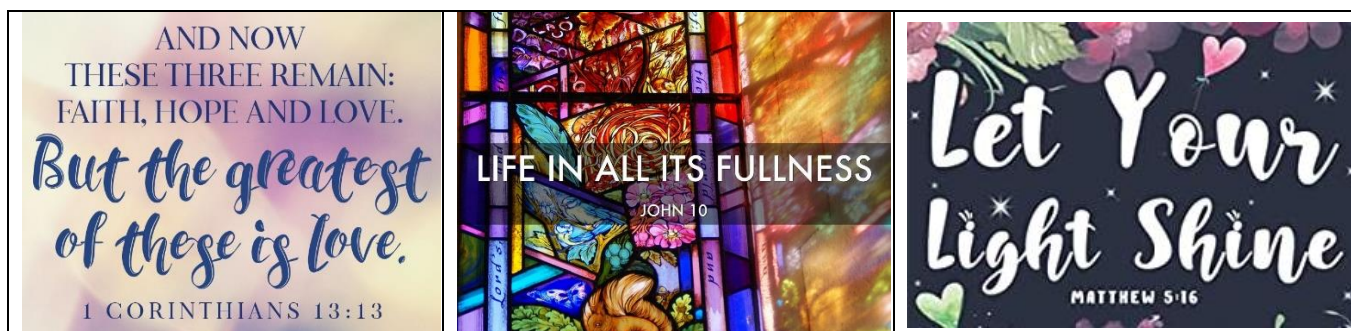
Learning & Growing Together in FAITH, HOPE & LOVE.

Introduction

Christ Church is a Church of England Primary School with strong roots in its Christian foundation. Our Collective Worship Policy has been written in the context of our Christian vision, aims and values. These are best summarised in our motto (see above) and in our Mission Statement:

We want our pupils to experience **LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS** and seek to ensure **DEEP PERSONAL GROWTH**. We aim to help our pupils discover who they are and who they might be. We promote a **TAKE CARE ETHOS** and encourage our children to take care of other people and the environment. We encourage our children to go **BEYOND EXPECTATION** and to **SHINE** in all that they do.

These are based on the following key theological teaching and Bible verses:



Christ Church CoE Primary School is part of the Southwell & Nottinghamshire Diocese, who are committed to 'Growing Disciples – wider, younger, deeper'. The Diocese recognises that Church schools play a significant role in this mission by offering children an opportunity to encounter - and be engaged with - the Christian faith. Through meaningful acts of Collective Worship, the school community can share in opportunities to experience 'Living Worship' and explore the Christian faith. Worship at Christ Church therefore offers the opportunity for the school community to be encouraged (and challenged) by the message of the Christian Gospel, and to engage with issues that encourage working towards a fairer world for everyone.

Collective Worship & the Law

Arrangements for Collective Worship in a Church School are the responsibility of the governors, in consultation with the Headteacher. This policy has therefore been formally adopted by the Governing Body, including the headteacher.

There are three main legal requirements for Collective Worship:

- The school must provide an act of Collective Worship for all pupils and staff every day. This act of worship can take place at any time of day and in any regular school grouping (e.g. whole school, key stage or class).
- Collective worship in a Church School should be carried out in accordance with the Christian foundation of the school as expressed in the Trust Deed and in accordance with the school ethos
- Parents/carers may withdraw their children from Collective Worship on religious grounds. These do not have to be justified or explained by the parents. Should children be withdrawn, the school must provide adequate supervision during the period in which the worship takes place. Children should not be withdrawn from collective worship for any other reason.

See DfE Circular 1/94 for further details

What is 'Collective Worship'?

ASSEMBLY is: Meeting together for a common purpose (e.g. a visiting theatre company or to give out important notices or deal with matters of common concern).

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP is: A coming together of the school community for the purpose of engaging in an opportunity to worship. In each act of Collective Worship, some of the elements of worship (*giving worth to God*) must be present.

An Assembly may include Collective Worship; but not every Assembly is Collective Worship.

Christian worship is an honouring of **God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit** (the Trinity).

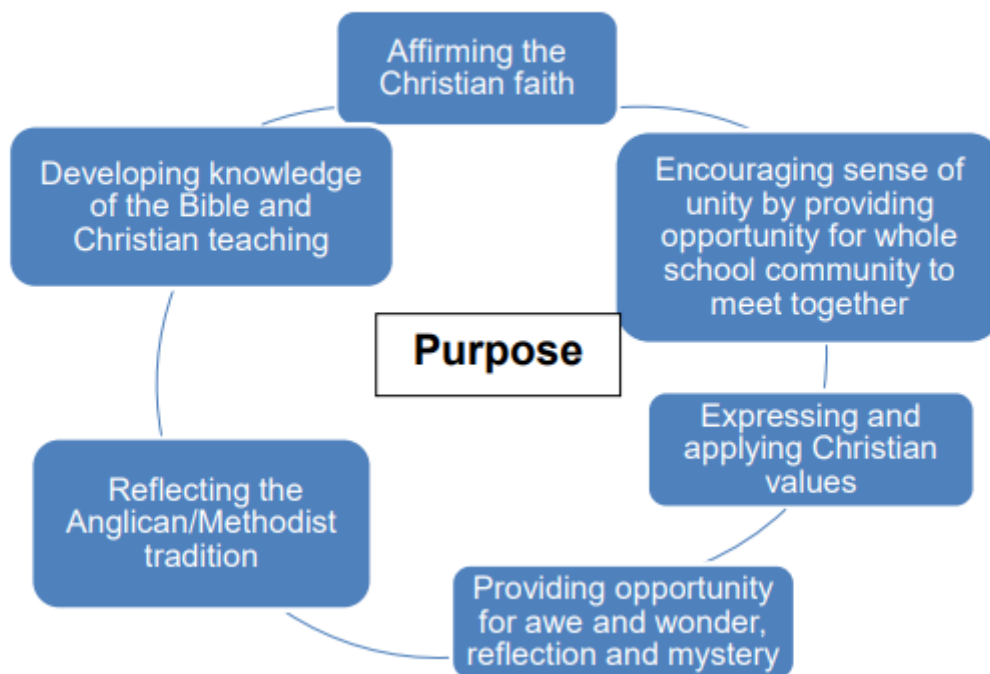
It acknowledges His transcendence and His "worth" and "value" (Holiness). It is a loving response to His nature as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Worship arises out of personal experience. Since worship is an attitude of the heart - focused on God - we cannot make anyone worship. In a school context, people can be led to the 'threshold of worship' by providing a setting where they have *opportunity* to worship God.

Collective Worship is a term which is used only in education. We recognise that assumptions cannot be made about shared beliefs within a school community. Collective Worship in a church school context must therefore take account of the varied backgrounds of the pupils and staff, as well as of the age and aptitude of children. In Collective Worship, children and adults will be responding to the worship in different ways and 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 Collective 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 not compromised but in which everyone finds something positive for themselves.

Purpose of collective worship



Aims of Collective Worship

Effective Collective Worship is one way in which a Church School can give expression to its founding Trust Deed and its distinctive Christian character. Collective Worship at Christ Church Primary School is therefore closely related to our vision and Mission Statement.

Worship at our school is a central activity in the daily life of our school community and we endeavour to ensure it is of the highest quality.

Collective Worship at Christ Church Primary School aims to:

- Be INCLUSIVE ~ INVITATIONAL ~ INSPIRING
- Enable children and staff to appreciate their worth and value to God, and to the community, and respect the integrity of each individual as a child made in the image of God.
- Share some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level and thereby give participants the encouragement to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework.
- Provide an opportunity for the school community to reflect upon God and to give Him honour.
- Enable the school community to make effective use of silence through opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation and prayer; thereby encouraging those present to engage with the spiritual dimension of worship.
- Heighten awareness of the ultimate questions and realities of life by providing the opportunity to reflect and search for meaning.
- Provide an opportunity to bring personal needs and the needs of others before God in prayer.
- Experience moments of awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy.

- Provide an opportunity to celebrate Christian festivals.
- Celebrate gifts, talents and achievements.
- Provide a vocabulary of worship and an experience of a wide variety of worship forms, including symbols and imagery.
- Establish, explore, and reinforce the common Christian values including love, peace, kindness, compassion, and forgiveness
- Encourage respect and care for God's creation by a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues.
- Provide opportunities for self-expression and creativity in worship.
- Foster sensitivity to other religions, their beliefs, values, cultures and traditions and as appropriate use these to enrich or deepen Christian faith

Organisation

We seek to ensure our Collective Worship includes four key elements:

GATHER – ENGAGE – RESPOND - SEND

In order to create a meaningful sense of occasion, consideration is given to:

- Rationale for timing of worship
- Appropriate themes linking to Christian teaching and values
- Involvement of children in the organisation and delivery of worship
- Appropriate locations for different worship (e.g. hall, classroom, outside area, church)
- Patterns of worship

With class-based worship, staff make efforts to differentiate between the time for worship and the other activities of the classroom. This might be achieved by the use of the reflective area in the classroom or through a particular layout of the classroom.

Worship Leaders may use a focal point to draw and focus attention. This might be a cross or candle or other artefact to enhance the worship experience. Images and words displayed on an interactive screen can also have a significant impact.

While it is customary to seat pupils in classes, either in lines or in a horseshoe shape, staff may also provide opportunities for children to sit in friendship groups or in their school houses which cross the age ranges. This allows older children to take responsibility for the younger ones.

Setting the Atmosphere for Worship

Pupils should enter and leave the worship space with a sense of order and respect. This can be carried out in a quiet and reverential way or in a celebratory manner, and may well involve the use of music to set the tone.

Worship will start with the staff member saying and signing: *'Good morning / afternoon everyone'*
The children respond with: *'Good morning / afternoon friends'*

We have a 3-wick 'Trinity Candle' for whole-school worship. When this is lit at the start of worship, the adult will say: *'This is the light of God'*. Children can choose to respond *'May it shine in me'*.

At the end of worship, the candle will be blown out and the adult will say: *'Although the darkness comes...'* and the children can choose to join in with *'His light will never leave us'*.

Staff might also close with the school motto (*We are 'Living & growing together in faith, hope and love'*) or by saying / signing:

In the name of the...

FATHER	SON	& HOLY SPIRIT
		

Children may join in with this (if they feel comfortable to), and it will help reinforce our teaching about the Trinity.

Inclusion & Equality

In line with our Equality and Inclusion Policies, our Collective Worship is planned to be inclusive, suitable for pupils and staff from all faiths and those of none. There is no expectation for participants to be actively involved in the worship, for example through singing or reciting prayers or joining with 'Amen'. Staff will recognise and respect the fact that some may choose to be passive observers during worship. Participants will be allowed to choose how to respond, for example, during prayer as long as they are being quiet and respectful.

Worship across the week

During the week, we have a range of different types of Collective Worship led by different members of staff or people from the wider community (e.g. Governors / clergy).

Over the course of the week, we aim to ensure each of the following aspects are incorporated in our Collective Worship:

- Word-centred
- Emotion-centred
- Symbol-centred
- Action-centred

Our ongoing weekly Collective Worship programme is likely to include or recognise:

- Bible focus / Bible story
- Christian festivals, events and special days
- 'Sing & Praise'
- Festivals from other faiths and/or special days linked to no faith but reflecting Christian Values
- Local, national or global recent events
- Time to recognise and celebrate our uniqueness and achievements

During our celebration worship, consideration is given to ensure elements of worship are included to reflect the Christian belief that all gifts and talents are God-given and should be celebrated as such. Similarly, 'Sing & Praise' or 'Choral Collective Worship' is valued as an opportunity for Christian teaching through learning the meaning behind the words of the songs/hymns.

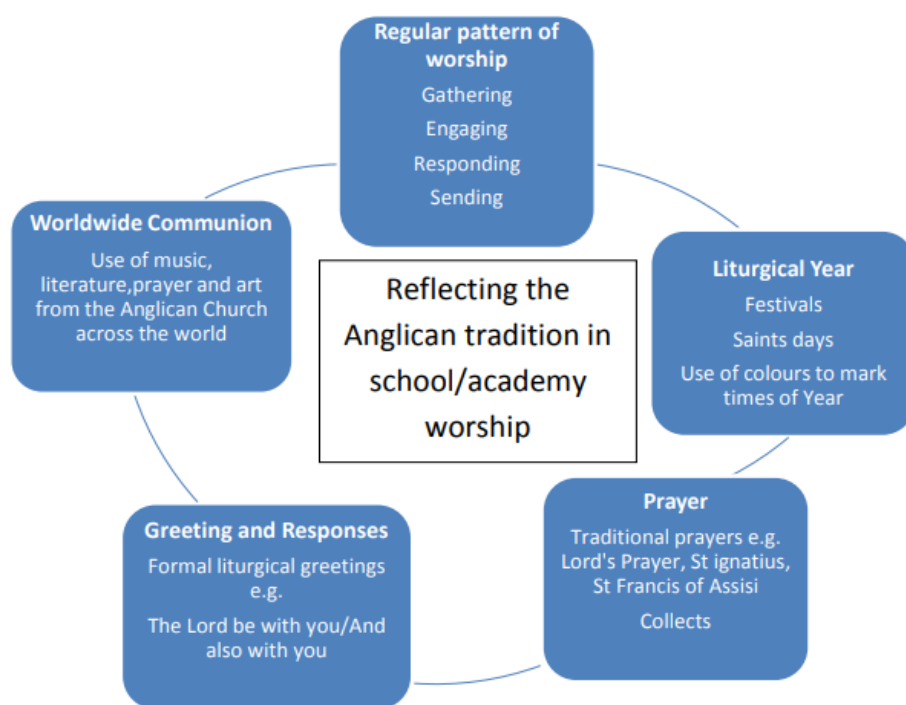
By adding a 'Thought for the Day' or a generic statement at the beginning (such as the example below) children are able to understand how Christian music may enhance their spirituality regardless of whether they are of faith or not.

"If you believe in God you may like to reflect that, through these songs, God might help you to discover important values for your life. If you do not have a belief in God, you may like to think how these songs can build a picture of the things that are important to people and to you and are helping to shape the kind of person you are becoming."

Our weekly worship programme also includes a mixture of whole-school, class or phase worship.

Class and phase worship is valuable because:

- Children can be given greater opportunity to participate and respond.
- Children are more likely to offer their deeper thoughts and feelings in a more intimate setting.
- Direct reference can be made to the children's work in curriculum areas.
- Stimulus material can be closely matched to the children's age and abilities.



EXPLORE ~ ENCOUNTER ~ EXPERIENCE

We use the 'Triple-E' approach to planning our worship. We want our children to:

EXPLORE – by having a reflective approach to

- Human experience
- The role of religion and faith
- Ideas about God, including their personal relationship with him
- The teachings of the Bible and other religious texts
- The place of core Christian values

ENCOUNTER

- Christianity as contemporary, diverse and vibrant
- Christianity in action
- People of faith
- Prayer and worship incorporated in everyday life
- Worship in an open, safe atmosphere

EXPERIENCE

- A community where faith is valued and respected
- Being part of a loving school family
- A sense of awe and wonder
- A reflective, worshipful atmosphere
- Worship that is creative, imaginative – and enjoyable!

Attendance at Worship

PUPILS: Pupils will be encouraged to attend and contribute to collective worship as a valued and pleasurable experience from which they can gain significant insights. The reason for a pupil's withdrawal from collective worship can only be 'on religious grounds' at the request of a parent / carer.

STAFF: Staff cannot be compelled to attend Collective Worship. However, Collective Worship should be seen as a valuable time for building and sustaining the school community. It is therefore hoped that staff and children will worship together. This provides a powerful role model for children and makes an important statement about the status of worship in school. School worship should not create the impression that it is voluntary for adults and compulsory for children. Worship should be an integral part of the school life and connected to the wider curriculum. The member of staff leading worship should be able to lead without being distracted by behaviour management issues and the presence of other adults can also facilitate the monitoring and assessment of the worship.

OTHERS: It is good to involve the wider community in the life of the school. This includes providing opportunities to invite and welcome parents, governors, local Christian leaders and members of the community to join with Collective Worship. We recognise that this strengthens the idea of worship as a unifying and cohesive force.

Responsibilities

Governors (including Foundation Governors):

- fulfilling their statutory duty
- ensuring there is a link-governor with responsibility for Christian Distinctiveness and Collective Worship
- monitoring the quality of collective worship
- ensuring Collective Worship is consistent with the school trust deed affirming the Christian faith
- expressing and applying Christian values
- ensuring worship reflects the Anglican tradition
- ensuring worship supports pupils develop their knowledge of the Bible and Christian teaching

Head Teacher and/or Worship Co-ordinator

- encouraging a sense of unity by providing opportunity for the whole-school community to meet together
- delegating responsibility for daily acts of Collective Worship which provide opportunities for awe and wonder, reflection and mystery
- supporting colleagues to identify and record themes / resources and to deliver Collective Worship
- identify training needs
- monitor acts of worship and evaluate impact
- ensure staff develop themes and content beyond Collective Worship

Leaders of Collective Worship

- plan and delivery of acts of worship in line with worship programme and policy

Incumbent / Clergy

- lead regular worship in school
- lead school services throughout school year and Christian calendar (e.g. Harvest, Christmas, Easter)

All parties will be involved in *evaluating the impact of the worship* through the following questions:

- How positive are learners' attitudes to Collective Worship?
- To what extent do learners and staff derive inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation from worship?

Visitors

We welcome a range of appropriate visitors to lead worship and expect them to be aware of this policy and to follow the Diocesan recommendations to:

- Understand that collective worship is intended to provide an opportunity to worship God.
- Consider the various faith backgrounds within the school community.
- Understand that in church school worship should be Christian but also be suitable for all to participate.

- Speak about their faith in terms that will help everyone know whose ideas are being shared e.g. 'Christians believe', 'The Bible says', 'In our church', 'Jesus taught'.
- Understand that some pupils and staff may have no religious background.

Visiting worship leaders are encouraged to:

- Carefully consider the age of the children and ensure all resources/content are age-appropriate.
- Make any visuals large so everyone can see them.
- Try to include something active (e.g. hand movements or words to repeat).
- Check songs – would it be best for the pupils to sing or just listen?
- Prepare questions carefully and move on swiftly (and kindly) when given an inappropriate response.
- Remember time is limited – worship is normally 15-20 minutes.
- Do not use prejudicial language, speak badly of other faiths or express controversial opinions; do not express faith opinion as fact.
- Introduce prayers or a quiet moment for reflection in a way that does not compromise pupils or staff but encourages everyone to take part. Think about how to end this time as well as start it.

Involving Children: Children as Worship Leaders

The best and most meaningful Collective Worship is where children are not passive spectators but enthusiastic contributors. We encourage our children to become active participants in our worship.

This might include:

- being a part of the initial planning process
- engaging them in setting a mood and creating a worshipful atmosphere
- encouraging children to empathise with characters in stories
- give children a few moments to allow them to talk and discuss
- providing time for quiet reflection and/or silent prayer
- class-led worship

Prayer Opportunities

Reading a prayer - either in worship or at another part of the day – is entirely appropriate as long as the integrity of all those present is respected. Every effort is made at Christ Church to show sensitivity towards personal faiths and to include all pupils and staff in collective worship. Participants will not be required to say or affirm prayers which they do not believe.

The following phrases may be used:

“Now, a time of stillness and quiet; a chance to think or pray for a moment.”

“I am going to read a prayer. I would like you to think carefully about the words. Some of you might wish to make the words your own by saying ‘Amen’ at the end”

In addition to Collective Worship, prayers will be said at other times of the day:

Our lunchtime prayer is said before children leave their classroom to go to lunch:

*Dear Lord,
Thank you for the world so sweet,
Thank you for the food we eat,
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you God for everything.
Amen*

We have an end of day prayer which is read by the class teacher before home time:

*God always listens whenever we pray,
He is never too busy to hear what we say,
So we will say thank you for what each day brings,
Friends to play with and many good things.
Amen*

The Lord's Prayer may be said in class or as part of worship:

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
Now and forever.
Amen*

Every classroom has a Reflective Area with prayer prompts to help children say their own prayers; this might include somewhere to write a personal prayer to be shared in class or whole-school worship (as appropriate). There are also 'Prayer Stops' through school, which prompt children to stop and say / think a prayer during the school day.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or more frequently, as required.