

St John the Baptist Church of England (VA) Primary School



Loving Learning, Building
Community, Growing in Faith

Collective Worship Policy

Our vision is to serve the city of Leicester by providing a high-quality education with a curriculum that inspires our children, is accessible to all and is firmly rooted in the teachings of Jesus. We strive to enable our children to thrive and succeed, through reaching their academic potential and developing their sense of identity, belonging, purpose and faith.

Review

This policy is reviewed every three years by a Committee of the Governing Body, and was last reviewed in March 2024.

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Signed: Jill Carr, Chair of Governors

A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Isaiah 40:3

Rationale: - Legal

Collective worship is a statutory requirement in all schools in England and Wales (The 1988 Education Reform Act) but at St John the Baptist C of E Primary school collective worship is much more than this.

Collective worship is part of the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum, which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and society (ERA 1988). The Trust Deed of the school is unavailable, but the legal requirement in Anglican schools is for worship to be consistent with the principles and practices of the Church of England and will, therefore, be wholly Christian in character.

Withdrawal – Parents continue to have the right to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship.

Rationale: - Religious / Educational

Collective worship, is at the heart of the daily life of our school. It is an integral part of our life together as a community. An oasis in the school day when children meet together with members of staff in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Where all present are given the opportunity to reflect and participate through feeling welcomed and included. It is regarded as 'quality' time and represents something special or separate from the ordinary school routine.

"Collective Worship in schools 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, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes." (DfE – Circular 1/94)

Our Bible verse:

*A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*

Isaiah 40:3

Supports our collective worship as we seek to prepare pupils for living life in the modern world dealing with the challenges of life as well as providing them with opportunities to develop and deepen a Christian faith if they so choose.

Definitions

Worship: 'Worship' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'weorthscipe' and can be defined as the adoration of God or a supreme being or to honour, value and praise someone or something of worth. In the context of worship in school, the aim is to provide experiences which deepen the inner senses and engender feelings of self-worth and the uniqueness of the individual.

School Assembly: is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself.

Corporate Worship: is a gathering of a body ('corpus') of believers and pre-supposes a particular religious commitment.

Collective Worship: is a gathering of a 'collection' of people of diverse, religious, agnostic, and non-religious backgrounds and does not pre-suppose any particular religious commitment.

At St John the Baptist C of E Primary school, we note that Collective Worship and Assembly are not one and the same thing. They are, in essence, different from each other, but in practice they often overlap.

Aims:

- to help children discover their place in the world
- to highlight and nurture the spiritual dimension through experiencing worship
- to provide children with a vocabulary of worship and an experience of a wide variety of worship forms, including symbols and imagery
- to provide an opportunity to celebrate major, and some minor, Christian festivals
- to heighten awareness of the ultimate questions of life and to provide the opportunity to reflect upon these
- to support the search for meaning
- to enable children to appreciate their worth and value to God, and to the community, and to respect the integrity of each individual as a child of God
- to enable pupils to make effective use of silence in opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation and prayer
- to celebrate gifts, talents and achievements
- to establish, explore, and reinforce the common Christian values of the school community such as love, peace, kindness, compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation
- to foster a feeling of community and belonging in the school through a sharing of experiences and feelings
- to develop personal relationships and to encourage social development
- to provide an opportunity to empathise with the needs of others
- to provide an opportunity for children to become acquainted with the faith of the people from the local and wider community, particularly the local church
- to encourage stewardship, respect and care for God's creation by a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues
- to foster feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy
- to give memorable and enjoyable experiences
- to provide an opportunity to bring before God in prayer, personal needs and those of others
- to share with participants some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level, and give them the encouragement to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God
- to encounter, by invitation the person of Jesus Christ through prayer and scripture

Approaches / Elements of Worship

"There are times when worship will be quiet, contemplative and serene and others when laughter, music and dance will be the appropriate form of expression."

The collective worship at St John the Baptist CE Primary School seeks to be **invitational, inclusive and inspirational.**

Worship begins with a responsive gathering and ends with a responsive sending out.

The collective worship will often include some of the following elements:

- using the Bible, either as a source book, or as an inspiration for themes and stories
- observing the cycle of the Church's Year - Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saints Days
- learning and saying traditional prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the Grace and simple responses
- singing a wide variety of hymns, from traditional to modern
- using Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning e.g. cross, crucifix, bread and wine, colours of the church year
- the use of readings, poetry, prayer, meditation, silence and reflection

- prayers including thanksgiving, intercession and penitence

The participation of pupils is encouraged through many of the approaches above, but we appreciate that children will respond in diverse ways to the experiences provided by collective worship. These responses may vary from showing awareness and appreciation at one end of the spectrum, through respect, to commitment and adoration at the other end.

Atmosphere is all-important in creating the right foundation for collective worship. Quiet, orderly behaviour and respectful attitudes on entering, leaving and throughout the worship time are expected. Staff enhance the atmosphere by their presence and participation. A covered table with a cross, a Bible and a candle help to set the scene and provide a focal point.

Music is played at the beginning and end of the collective worship. A piece of music is selected each week and pupils' attention is drawn to it through a simple explanation/ description usually given in the worship and singing time.

Stories and talks are carefully chosen to fulfil the objectives of collective worship. Stories of a religious or secular nature may be used whilst personal anecdotes from pupils, teachers and visitors is effective in expressing that which is important in our own lives. Particular emphasis is laid upon helping children to understand themselves better, to develop empathy and to reflect on moral issues.

Songs are chosen from a variety of traditional and modern hymns and worship songs. One or two are used during each act of worship, relative to the theme and there is sometimes percussion accompaniment provided by the children. Some are learned by heart and actions are incorporated, whilst others are displayed on the screen. Hymns and songs create the opportunity for children to express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to put into words; and they provide a source of pleasure.

Prayer and reflection are the most personal part of an act of worship. Collective worship provides opportunities for children to be invited to pray if they wish, but is never imposed on them. We stress the need for stillness, reflection and respect for others, enabling all to respond as they feel able. Silence, written prayers, impromptu prayers, The Lord's Prayer, children's prayers and the school prayer may be used. A candle is lit and provides a focus for pupils' thoughts. Reflection and thinking time are given some direction by the leader in order to focus pupils' response. Scripture sentences may be quoted from the Bible and, longer passages may be used as readings. Presentation sets the tone within the act of worship. In keeping with the reverent atmosphere, use is also made of visual aids, artefacts, drama, demonstration and video.

Management of Collective Worship

The role of the Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the foundation of the school is honoured and that the collective worship policy is firmly based upon the intentions set down in the legal requirements for church aided Anglican schools and guidelines set out by the diocese.

They should:

- be actively involved and familiar with all documentation regarding Collective Worship issued on their behalf and be actively involved in the process of Collective Worship development within the school
- ensure that the collective worship Policy is put into practice and monitored by the appropriate Governor.
- ensure that Collective Worship is appropriately reviewed as part of the school improvement plan and be actively involved in the review process
- be aware of the requirement under Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) for the inspection of Collective Worship.

- Be aware that it is a statutory requirement that a school prospectus includes details of Collective Worship provided at the school. These details should inform parents of the parental right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship. The arrangements and provision made for those children withdrawn from worship should be clearly stated
- Offer an opportunity to discuss the form of worship provided with parents

The Head Teacher

The Head teacher:

- Should be aware of their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship and take account of the policy and guidelines of the Diocese
- Should ensure that governors and staff are well informed and receive training in order to implement the Diocesan policy on Collective Worship

The Collective Worship Coordinator

The collective worship coordinator:

- Has responsibility for managing the collective worship on a daily basis.
- Assists the governors and head teacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to collective worship.
- The coordinator keeps up to date with national developments in school worship, and ensures that there is a development plan for collective worship in the school improvement plan.
- Reports to the head teacher and governors on matters of review and development.
- Communicates with members of the school community regarding the significance and contents of collective acts of worship.
- Develops and maintains effective procedures for planning, recording, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing collective acts of worship.
- Develops and utilises resources available for collective worship as well as providing training and support for colleagues.

Organisation

Each week the worship follows a pattern where:

Monday is whole school worship which focuses on our school and Christian values for that week.

Tuesday is key stage worship where a theme is followed, that links to our school vision or is based on the Bible. Some visitors are invited in on a Tuesday and this may then be a whole school collective act of worship. Wednesday is classroom worship or wild worship and Thursday is singing and worship in phases.

Friday is whole school worship which is either lead by a class or a member of SLT with a focus on picture news or visitors.

The school worships in church on the following occasions, Harvest, Advent, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Ascension Day or Pentecost, and St John the Baptist Day. The KS1 and 2 Christmas presentations are also performed in the church.

The rector and school link staff from St John the Baptist Church lead acts of collective worship on a regular basis. Visitors and outside speakers are also invited to lead our worship on a regularly.

The structure of worship times includes elements from following; a greeting, music, a song of praise, a story or talk, a reading from the Bible, a period of reflection, a prayer such as the Lord's Prayer or the school prayer, a reminder each day of the theme for the week which may have an accompanying 'saying. And a 'sending out'.

Day	Time	Organisation	Leader
Monday	9.05am – 9.25am	Whole School - Christian value of the week	Head teacher / SLT
Tuesday	9.05am – 9.20am	FS2 & KS1 KS2 (Whole School when visitors) Themes relating to our vision and Bible Stories	Class teachers / visitors
Wednesday	During the school day 9.05am	Classroom or wild worship Value focused, Bible focused, significant events Whole School (Church links)	Class teachers St John the Baptist Church staff
Thursday	1.20pm – 1.50pm 1.55pm – 2.25pm 2.30pm – 3.00pm	LKS2 - Praise and worship – singing KS1 - Praise and worship - singing UKS2 – praise and worship-singing	Mrs Beaumont - Music coordinator
Friday	2.05pm – 3.00pm	Whole School – Achievement, picture news, class led worship	Head teacher / SLT /MLT

Visitors

Carefully selected visitors are regularly invited to contribute to our acts of collective worship, as guests and speakers. These partnerships are highly valued and enrich the awareness and understanding of the pupils. Visitors include clergy, representatives of charities, motivational speakers and others.

Members of the staff team at St John the Baptist Church are frequent and significant contributors to the pattern of collective worship.

Parents are invited to attend acts of collective worship at major festivals when they take place (usually twice a term) at St John's Church. Parents are also invited to attend the acts of worship that their child's class leads. Parents have been welcome to attend other acts of worship too, provided that this has been agreed with the head teacher beforehand.

Time Allocation

Collective worship normally lasts for up to 20 minutes each day, although on special occasions it may be longer.

Planning and Recording

The collective worship co-ordinator is responsible for planning, co-ordinating and keeping records of collective worship throughout the school, as well as drawing up rotas for leading collective worship. This is done in consultation with the head teacher.

Resources

Books and religious artefacts are available to enhance acts of worship. Coloured cloths and ribbons linking to the liturgical colours are kept in the hall. Crosses, and other Christian symbols are on display around the school. A cross, candle and Bible are set out on the focus table at the front of the hall. Music of the week for entering and leaving worship times is organised by the music co-ordinator. Many resources are available on the internet, including videos, as well as ideas for acts of worship.

The school hall provides a suitable space for phases, key stages and the whole school to gather. Classrooms and other areas of the school including the outside grounds also offer opportunities for times of personal reflection and worship. Wild worship sessions have been introduced to utilise our outdoor space.

Provision is made in the school budget for training and updating staff on collective worship issues and well as for providing resources to enhance collective worship.

Details of courses attended will be kept by the office.

Evaluation and Review of Policy

The governors (in particular the foundation governors and incumbent), in consultation with the head teacher, are responsible for the policy on collective worship. Teaching staff will also be consulted. The working of the policy will be appraised annually and the policy will be fully reviewed every three years.

This evaluation takes place against the Christian foundation of the school, the present policy and the needs and backgrounds of its pupils.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents which provide further guidance on collective worship from the Diocese of Leicester

<https://www.leicesterdbbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/DBE-CW-Guidance.pdf>

and the Church of England

<https://www.leicesterdbbe.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Collective-Worship-Guidance-18052021.pdf>

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