



Curiosity, Courage, Compassion

'A community learning together in God's love'

Thundridge and Tonwell St Mary's Church Schools' Federation

Collective Worship Policy

Date updated: September 2023

Review Date: September 2024

Aims, Vision and Values

The aim of Collective Worship at our school is to introduce pupils to worship in a manner appropriate to their age, aptitude and family background and drawing upon the riches of the Anglican and other Christian traditions.

Our school Christian vision and values are that we aim to help each person to:

Be interested to develop a love and independence for learning and be ready to try new things.

Be brave enough to make mistakes, have a go at challenges and try again.

Be kind showing respect and care to all.

As part of a community learning together in God's love promoting our core values of 'Curiosity, Courage, Compassion'. Our federation is a community where each person is known and valued. We are ambitious for all to develop our three Cs, as well as Christian and British values. Our vision is theologically rooted in the parable of 'The Good Samaritan'. This is a story from the Bible which is told by Jesus. It illustrates our core values in the following ways:

Compassion:

The Samaritan stops to help the injured man showing care and respect.

Courage:

Whilst others walked past and left the injured man, the Samaritan showed courage to do the right thing and help him.

Curiosity:

The Samaritan showed curiosity (and more courage) to help and speak to the injured man who was from a different community.

We use God's word with links to two Bible verses from 'The Good Samaritan':

He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself (Luke 10:27)

This verse illustrates the central Christian theme of love which underpins our three 'C's.

Jesus told him 'Go and do likewise' (Luke 10:37)

This verse illustrates Jesus' teaching from the parable, which we link to our three 'C's and use to help us 'live them out'

We use the following resources to support children when learning about our vision:

The Lion Storyteller Bible – The Kind Stranger story

Out of the Ark Music – Love the Lord Your God song

Our vision and values are promoted through collective worship times.

Collective worship plays a vital role in the life of the school giving everyone in the school community a chance to gather, stop and reflect. Prayer and worship underpins the school's distinctive Christian character supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Our aim is that all pupils will have a positive experience of belonging to our school community and have opportunities to reflect upon their own

beliefs and values. It is something we do together but embraces a variety of faith commitment.

We believe Collective Worship should:

- Be daily for all children
- Underpin the values and ethos
- Be inclusive to all
- Be invitational recognising that there will be people from a range of faiths and none
- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christian prayer and Anglican traditions
- Provide opportunities for children to respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Be led by the children on occasion and engage everyone
- Share times of joy and times of sadness with each other
- Allow time for reflection
- Be monitored and evaluated by pupils, staff and governors

The Style and Structure of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is an opportunity for children to explore the spiritual dimension of their world. At our school, we use the GERS model for the structure of worship times (gather, engage, respond/*reflect*, send - see Appendix 1)

The style of acts of worship will vary according to the age of the children and our half termly Christian value themes. Over a period of time we expect to provide opportunities for:

- stillness and a time to reflect
- use of candle, cross or other object to act as a focal point
- use of words, stories, pictures and symbols as stimuli
- prayer (own silent, led by adult, led by child, well known prayers including the Lord's prayer)
- hymns, songs and music (listening, participation, reflection on meaning of lyrics)
- drama
- questions and answers – and sometimes the admission that there are no definite answers
- expressions of thankfulness, praise and joy.
- feelings of sadness and loss will be included when appropriate
- visitors from a variety of denominations and charities
- Exploring God's word

Spirituality

Promoting ways for children and adults to explore spirituality is central to our schools, transcending all areas. We believe that there is more to life than what we see in front of us. We recognise that all people have spirituality and for some that includes faith. Spirituality connects the relationships we have with ourselves, with others, with the wider world and, for some, with God.

Our daily collective worship is the heartbeat of our school and gives opportunities to both pupils and staff to develop spirituality. We use the GERS model (Gather, Engage, Respond/*Reflect*, Send). Our Reflection could be through prayer, periods of silence or listening to music.

We aim to develop spiritual skills:

Be **curious** to ask questions

Ask how can we 'Go and do likewise' like the Samaritan in our Bible story

Show care and **compassion** for yourself, others and the world around us

Be able to stop rushing and be still, calm & peaceful

Be able to forgive

Develop own sense of right & wrong and have **courage** to share your beliefs

Be able to make mistakes, learn from them & move on with a growth mindset

Be aware of what makes you, you & what is special about you

Be able to give and help others

The Content of Collective Worship

- Collective Worship is Christian in nature. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Collective Worship takes place each day and is led by staff, pupils and volunteers from the church community at times (e.g. Open the Book).
- Collective Worship involves the whole school meeting together. Occasionally individual classes hold their own acts of worship.
- Themes for worship time are chosen to reflect the school's values curriculum which addresses a different Christian value each half term, e.g. love, respect, forgiveness (on a rotational cycle). The RE and PSHE schemes of work are also used to supplement the content of worship times together with the Diocesan Collective Worship Planner, which highlights the major Christian festivals.
- Where appropriate, Collective Worship links with any event, local, national or world, of which the children may be aware and offer appropriate worship in response.
- At the end of term, a collective worship time is held at the link church where parents are invited to join in. The major services are normally:

September/October

Harvest Festival

December

Christmas service

March/April

Holy Week and Easter service (Y5/6 usually take part in the Easter Experience at All Saints, Hertford)

July

End of year leavers' service

End of term services involve the children in active participation (drama, readings, singing, leading prayer).

- From time to time ministers from other Christian denominations, other faiths or visitors representing charities, organisations or projects may be invited to lead or contribute to Collective Worship.

- We regard Collective Worship as non-curriculum time, but also recognise the opportunities that arise for links to be made with some areas of the curriculum, particularly PSHE and RE. The school regularly participates in Anti-Bullying Week, Feeling Good Week and Safer Internet Day. We also regard opportunities for speaking and listening in worship time as important for all pupils.

Evaluation and Monitoring of Collective Worship

Worship is regularly monitored. Outcomes of monitoring are shared, discussed and responded to through discussions with SLT, staff and pupils. The governors also review the provision of collective worship.

Right of Withdrawal

All children are invited to attend collective worship. However, we recognise the right of withdrawal of any parent under the 1988 Education Reform Act. In these circumstances the Headteacher would discuss the matter with parents and, if necessary, would make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the periods concerned. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from collective worship (1944 Education Act).

Appendix 1

The principles of the GERS model are applicable to whole school, key stage and class worship. These are questions to support thinking around planning collective worship using the GERS model.

Gathering We gather together and greet each other. We all come to play a part in this community. We are preparing to meet God. How is the room set up? How is seating arranged? Does everyone know what they should be doing? What will the greeting be like?

Engaging: We engage with the big things and the little things in life. We encounter Jesus and the stories of the Bible. We are listening for God's message for us. How will you share God's message? How will you share your own experiences or contemporary events? What strategies will you use?

Responding/Reflecting: We respond to what we have heard and seen. We respond together as individuals. We are given the opportunity to worship God. Will you use singing or prayer or reflection time? Will there be a practical response and how will this be encouraged? Do you give enough time to responding?

Sending: We are sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the world. We are all dismissed with God's blessing. How will people leave worship – singing? silently? Will there be special words of blessing or dismissal?

