

St. John's Church of England VA Primary School



# Collective Worship Policy

Head Teacher	<i>N. Pallister</i>
Chair of Governors	<i>A. Harris</i>
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*Shining Bright Together As One Family*

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## 1. St. John's Christian Vision and Values

We have high aspirations and expectations for all our pupils, aiming to provide a safe and secure environment in which everyone can flourish and grow as God's children. Working together with parents and carers, we are building strong relationships, enabling us to 'Shine Bright Together as One Family.'

This reflects our Christian vision and associated values, where every member of our school community – pupils, parents, staff and governors – has a role to play in ensuring every person thrives. Our vision is based on the words of Jesus written in Matthew chapter 5 verse 16:

“In the same way, let your light shine before others,  
that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

The desire at St. John's is for every person to shine their own light brightly, whether it be through academic ability, sport, music, art or personal interest outside of school. Everyone is important and special: a unique masterpiece in the eyes of God.

We also feel it is important that we are never truly alone. At St. John's, we stand together with each other, supporting and helping, celebrating and comforting. We are one school, church and community family, doing life together.

The four core Christian values which are particularly important in the life of our school are:

- Forgiveness
- Friendship
- Respect
- Perseverance

## **2. Aims and objectives**

The aims and objectives of collective worship at St. John's are to:

- provide an opportunity for pupils and adults to worship God;
- encourage pupils and adults to explore and deepen their own sense of spirituality;
- enable pupils and adults to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- enable pupils and adults to explore their own beliefs;
- encourage participation and response;
- promote a common vision, with shared values, to reinforce Christlike attitudes and actions.

## **3. Legal requirements**

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we base our acts of worship on the teachings of the Bible, of Jesus Christ in the New Testament and the traditions of the Christian Church.

However, we worship in a manner that is sensitive to the faiths and beliefs of all members of school. While all acts of worship in our school are Christian, we occasionally hold assemblies that reflect the traditions of other religions or worldviews that are represented in the school and the wider community.

## 4. Introduction to collective worship

In St. John's C of E (Voluntary Aided) Primary School, we endeavour to promote each child's spiritual, moral and social development as well as their academic education. Through our daily acts of collective worship, we introduce pupils to the act of prayer and the opportunity to develop their own spirituality. Daily acts of worship are carried out at the beginning of each day.

Collective worship at St. John's is:

- **Inclusive** – While acts of worship are Christian in nature and will always reflect our biblically rooted Christian vision, 'Shining Bright Together as One Family' (from Matthew 5:16) and Christian values, they also provide an opportunity for personal reflection on a variety of aspects of life that all pupils and adults can respond to.
- **Invitational** – Collective worship at St. John's provides the opportunity to engage in meaningful ways (discussions, visuals, reflections) whilst respecting the rights, freedom and integrity of those who have different or no faith. Prayers are invitational and members of the school community are invited to share in the prayer being led, say an individual prayer, or reflect further on the themes and messages from the time of worship. This integral part of our school day meets each member of the school community where they are.
- **Inspiring** – Our intention is for collective worship to be inspirational and transformational, enabling pupils and adults to ask and think about big questions: who we are and why we do what we do. It is motivational and encourages our school community to consider different aspects of their daily lives and how they might think or behave differently, accounting for their own beliefs and the rights and beliefs of others. Each act of worship concludes with a reflection and prayer, encouraging every person to pause and consider what they might do because of the theme or message.

## 5. Organisation of collective worship

Our acts of collective worship are conducted in a dignified, honourable and respectful manner. Pupils understand that collective worship is a period of calm reflection, regarding it as a special time. They are expected to behave in an appropriate way. During worship, pupils and adults are thoughtful, listen carefully to what is being said, and to participate in prayer, praise and worship. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, and candles or other objects, to focus the attention of the children.

Acts of worship generally follow the same format: **Gather – Engage – Respond – Send**, which help pupils and adults to focus, giving them opportunity to respond where necessary.

We believe it is important for our pupils to have a broad balance of more traditional and contemporary worship styles. Acts of collective worship are led by a wide range of people:

- Mrs Pallister (Headteacher)
- Mr Kay (Deputy Headteacher and collective worship lead)
- Senior Leadership Team
- Class teachers
- Local clergy – Revd. Carol Harris (Vicar)
- Catherine Simpson (School Chaplain) with the Worship Warriors
- Local ministers Revd. David Payne (from the Methodist Church) and Pastor John Campbell (a retired Elim Minister from a local Assemblies of God Church).

The weekly organisation of our collective worship is as follows:

- Monday – Monday Morning Praise led by Mrs Pallister & Mr Kay
- Tuesday – led by Revd. Carol Harris, SLT (alternate fortnights) and Pastor John Campbell
- Wednesday – led by class teachers and Revd. David Payne
- Thursday – led by Catherine Simpson and the Worship Warriors
- Friday – Celebration Worship including *Values Awards* led by the SLT

## 6. Planning collective worship

We take many of the themes of our collective worship from the traditions of the Christian faith and from Christian Values. As a planning tool, we use the *Imaginar* 'Roots and Fruits' book 1, based around twelve Christian Values, one for each half term. The Christian Values follow a two-year plan:

- Generosity
- Compassion
- Courage
- Forgiveness
- Friendship
- Respect
- Thankfulness
- Trust
- Perseverance
- Justice
- Service
- Truthfulness

We observe Christian festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. In addition to this values-led cycle, we include a third year from 'Roots and Fruits' book 2. This follows the life and teachings of Jesus across six half terms:

- The Words of Jesus
- Advent and Christmas
- People Jesus Meets (such as Martha & Mary and Zacchaeus)
- Holy Week and Easter
- The Parables of Jesus
- The Miracles of Jesus

Our lead for collective worship works closely with Revd. Carol, Catherine Simpson (our school chaplain) and our Worship Warriors (pupil group) who help to plan and deliver worship. Pupils are regularly included in leading and evaluating worship, sharing their own thoughts and ideas about big questions.

## 7. Shared language of spirituality

To enable pupils and adults to understand and articulate their own journey of spirituality, we have introduced the shared language of wow, ow and now. In collective worship, we regularly challenge pupils to find the **wow, ow and now**, and how it could apply to their own lives today.

- **The wow moments** – these are the awe and wonder, breath taking moments – the opportunities to share and celebrate achievements, e.g. the wonder and beauty of Creation, Science, Geography etc.
- **The ow moments** – these are the times in our lives when we find things challenging and hard going. Recognising and talking about these times are important, so we can help and support each other through them, e.g. challenging concepts, new learning, difficult conversations about death, moments of sadness etc.
- **The now moments** – these are the everyday moments where our spirituality is explored – valuing opportunities for stillness, reflection and connection with ourselves, others and the world around us, e.g. when lost in reading, being moved by music, creating art as a form of self-expression – connecting with your creativity etc.

## 8. Celebration worship

Our Friday Celebration Worship reflects the achievements and learning of the pupils. We encourage pupils to participate by showing their work to the other children, and by raising issues that they have discussed in their classes. These weekly times of thanksgiving provide an opportunity to reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They also play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all pupils are valued and can shine their light, where all achievements are recognised. We believe we are a successful school, and we shall continue to celebrate the successes of all our pupils.

We have recently introduced new awards to be celebrated in Friday Celebration Worship – *Values Awards*. These special awards link to our core Christian values of:

- Forgiveness
- Friendship
- Respect
- Perseverance

Governors' attendance at acts of Collective Worship is always welcome.

## 9. Right of withdrawal

We expect all pupils to attend collective worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the assembly. Parents and carers do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from acts of collective worship.

## 10. Monitoring and review

Monitoring the policy and practice of collective worship is the role of a named school governor (Andy Harris), who is also responsible for the school policy for collective worship. The governor concerned liaises with the headteacher before reporting to the governors.

On a regular basis, a small group of children, usually the *Worship Warriors*, informally evaluate acts of collective worship making a note of themes, songs and answering these familiar questions:

- What have we seen?
- What have we heard?
- Has it changed us?

The collective worship lead reviews these periodically with pupils and staff and feeds back in whole staff meetings.

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if necessary.