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## Collective Worship Policy

This policy intends to outline the policy and procedure for collective worship at Weaverthorpe Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School.

In our Church school, our vision:

'We believe that an effective education will support everyone to value the richness of life; and to live it to the full. As we work to provide the best outcomes for all, we encourage our children to challenge themselves morally, intellectually, spiritually, creatively and actively. Everybody is different and each one of us is encouraged to smile, learn, forgive and persevere as we follow our dreams.'

John 10:10 King James Version (KJV)

<sup>10</sup>The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

This policy intends to outline how our whole school community lives this out in relation to collective worship.

**Our Christian Values of are firmly rooted in this policy.**

**Friendship:** It is a key concept in the Christian framework, with Jesus being criticised for being 'the friend of sinners' and eating with those whom society rejected. Sharing a meal with someone is an explicit sign of friendship and the word 'companion' literally means 'one with whom you share bread.'

Jesus tells stories of the heavenly banquet to which all are invited. The barriers between people are broken down in a loving community around God and Jesus had stern words to say to those who refused to recognise that all are included in this community of friendship.

The Bible has many sayings about friendship:

- 'A friend loves at all times.' (Proverbs 17:17).
- Friends are not afraid to tell each other the truth and a friend's loving criticism is worth more than the empty compliments of someone who does not really care for you.
- 'Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.' (Proverbs 27:6)
- The writer of Ecclesiastes puts it very simply: 'if one falls down, a friend can lift him up'. (Ecclesiastes 4:10)
- The friendship of David and Jonathan is very strongly emphasised in the Bible, Abraham is described as the friend of God (James 2:23) and Jesus explicitly calls his disciples not servants but friends (John 15:14 - 15).

Trust, feeling comfortable in each other's company, being able to share joys and sorrows are all features of friendship and these are things of immense value. True friendship enables each person to grow and ensures that the unique individuality of each person is recognised. All this echoes the value placed by God on the preciousness of each person.

Hymns like 'What a friend we have in Jesus' point to a relationship that is at the heart of Christian believing. Knowing that God is our friend is to recover something of the acceptance and close companionship that people of all ages need and crave.

**Forgiveness:** Forgiveness is fundamental to the character of God. Throughout the Bible, God is described as slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin (Numbers 14:18). Jesus was uncompromising in his command to forgive. Forgive, he said, 'seventy times seven' (Matthew 18:21), meaning forgive and keep on forgiving without limit. Forgiveness was at the heart of everything he did and is at the heart of the Lord's Prayer. When Jesus declared a person's sins to be forgiven, it often aroused the anger of those who were less willing to forgive than he was and yet a prayer for the forgiveness of his persecutors was on Jesus' lips as he died. Christian preaching has always put forgiveness at the centre.

We forgive because we are forgiven. Forgiveness cannot be given or received unless it is asked for, and the asking must be genuine and from the heart. Too often 'sorry' is said very easily, implying: 'All I need to do is say I'm sorry and everything will be OK'. Real repentance demands that we take what we have done wrong with the utmost seriousness and have a deep desire not to do it again.

**Endurance:** *For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations* (Psalm 100:5)

The word can be used for standing firm in the face of hardship, persecution or scorn, but we hope this is not our situation in our school. We use it more in the context of 'keeping going, and not giving up' as endurance is the special gift that we have when life is difficult or painful that helps us not to give up.

The Bible assures us that God's love, mercy, faithfulness and righteousness endure forever (e.g. Psalm 118:136). Emphasis upon endurance is common in the New Testament, where it is linked with patience and suffering.

St Paul is certain that endurance is honed by suffering, is character building, and is characterised by love (Romans 5: 3–4; I Corinthians 4: 12–13). It is linked with self-control, godliness (2 Peter 1: 6) and steadfastness. At its root, endurance is a recognition that life is sometimes difficult and painful, and that it is important not to give up in the face of adversity.

Jesus endured rejection, abuse and the cross, and his followers are warned that they may well have to share that pain as persecution took hold. Discipleship is depicted as 'taking up the cross daily' and following in Jesus' footsteps (Luke 9: 23).

Endurance and perseverance are only possible where there is hope, and that hope is based on the enduring nature of God's love and faithfulness. Even Jesus, for all his strength and ability to endure, looked to his disciples to help and sustain him by watching and praying with him (*Matthew 26*).

**Thankfulness:** *God gave you a gift of 86,400 seconds today. Have you used one to say thank you? Anon*

Thankfulness has always been at the centre of the life and worship of Christians. 'Songs of thankfulness and praise...' are at the heart of Christian worship. Jesus gave thanks to God (Matthew 11.25) and although the word 'thankfulness' is not common in the Gospels, recognition of his dependence on the Father infuses the whole life of Jesus. Thankfulness is a wholehearted response. It stems from a consciousness of God's gifts and blessings. It is a joyfulness that erupts into praise. Paul frequently encourages us to 'be thankful' (Colossians 3:15), to 'give thanks in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:18) and says that our lives should 'overflow with thankfulness' (Colossians 2:7).

For Christians the greatest of all acts of worship is simply called 'thanksgiving' or Eucharist.

What do we do in school in response to thankfulness?

- We show our appreciation for pupil's achievements through giving certificates and stickers to them.
- We know that having food, clothes and lovely things is a blessing and not a right.
- We show our thankfulness through our support to charities that help others who are not as fortunate as ourselves.
- We give thanks to God through our hymns and our prayers, this is genuine and not simply saying the words.
- We learn to be thankful for the skills of others and the ways in which they enrich our lives.

- We give thanks to people in our community who visit and help us. We write letters of thanks.
- We say thank you to each other and know that saying thank you is important and polite.

At Weaverthorpe CE (VC) Primary School, Collective Worship is regarded as a special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a Church school. It aims to promote mutual respect between all members of the school community and beyond. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none. It is discussed with the Head teacher when families and children feel they need to withdraw from certain aspects of Collective Worship.

## **Rationale**

This Collective Worship policy reflects and reinforces the school's aims, ethos and values and demonstrates the partnership between the conduct and content of school worship and the ethos of the whole school. At Weaverthorpe CE (VC) Primary School we consider Collective Worship to be a significant educational activity that both reflects and explores the school's distinctive Christian character and contributes to the academic achievement, personal development and well-being of all learners. It is a time to come together, as a community, to share common values and principles and to develop a sense of awe and wonder concerning our place within the world.

The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community. Therefore, Collective Worship at Weaverthorpe CE (VC) Primary School is planned to:

- to be inspirational and inclusive;
- regularly include Biblical material and Christian teaching and which will explore and relate to the school's core Christian values;
- have a strong focus on God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit enabling all learners to embark on an understanding of the Trinity;
- have a strong focus on the person of Jesus Christ and his position central to the Christian faith;
- help all learners to understand Anglican and other Christian traditions found in the UK and worldwide.
- challenge all learners of all backgrounds to understand and embark on their own spiritual journey.
- be an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals.

## **Aims**

Collective Worship at Weaverthorpe CE (VC) Primary School aims to:

- enable the school community to explore and celebrate the differences and diversity found in the variety of forms of worship in the Anglican Christian tradition;
- explore the school's Christian vision and values and celebrate each unique individual member of the school community as made in the image of God;
- share teachings of the Christian faith for the school community to make an informed choice and to consider their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ;
- encourage all present to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework
- raise awareness through reflection of the ultimate questions of life relating to matters of faith;
- encourage respect and care for God's created world by promoting a positive attitude to environmental issues locally, nationally and globally;
- seek to provide opportunities for spiritual, social and moral development that is characterised by feelings such as awe, wonder, being uplifted, elation, appreciation, gratitude, respect, and reverence;
- develop a sense of community within the school, the locality, (e.g. local church) and foster the sense of being part of a wider community through the celebration of achievements, festivals and special occasions;
- provide an opportunity to bring personal needs and those of others before God in prayer;
- help children discover their place in the world;
- develop inner awareness, valuing self and the view and opinions of others;
- engage all learners, who should be able to talk about the impact it makes on their relationships and on life in the school.

## **Statement of Withdrawal**

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from acts of worship and this is stated in the school prospectus. In such circumstances, parents are encouraged to discuss their reasons for withdrawal with the Headteacher, although they are not required to do so.

## **Inclusion**

Weaverthorpe CE (VC) Primary School is a school for everyone, regardless of beliefs. Therefore, during Collective Worship, we are always sensitive to the very wide range of backgrounds and beliefs represented by our school community. This includes:

- those who have, or who come from families with, Christian commitment and belief;
- parents who have chosen a church school (or who support its ethos) because they wish their children to experience something of the Christian faith;
- members of other faith communities;
- those who may not share in any particular religious belief.

## **Planning and Organisation**

Themes for Collective Worship are planned by the co-ordinator using the Roots and Fruits framework as a basis. Planning focusses primarily upon the study of a value. The Christian calendar and areas of interest shown by pupils, in their own faith, are also taken into account in Collective worship planning.

Whole school Collective Worship is held on 4 days of the week, with class-based worship held on the remaining day.

Whole School Celebration: Once a week on a Friday, the School gathers for this worship, in which achievements of pupils at the school are celebrated. This worship will normally provide opportunities for spiritual development.

Each class has responsibility for delivering part of a longer Collective Worship which may be held at Church to celebrate a specific time of year (e.g. Christmas, Easter, Harvest).

Year 6 prepare and deliver the act of worship in church that is their Leavers' Service.

Pupils are invited to be volunteers on an 'ad hoc' basis to act out or role play situations/stories.

## **Implementation and Delivery**

We mark out this special time by lighting three candles (to represent the Trinity), entering and exiting calmly and quietly, having time for stillness and reflection, saying „welcome words“ and responses together, singing and listening to music. Each person leading worship is expected to plan his or her act of worship with the same degree of thoroughness as any other aspect of their teaching.

We encourage a 4-stage structure of planning:

- Gathering: We welcome the community with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle.
- Engaging: We share a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message.
- Responding: Pupils discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing.
- Sending: We share the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will impact upon their day, learning and/or behaviour.

We close worship with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of the candles. We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities, including: music, silence, symbolism, drama, ICT etc.

## **Responsibilities**

Pupils from Year 6 can volunteer to carry out routine tasks such as setting up the Worship Table, welcoming and dismissing, organising the music and operating the CD player. In addition, pupils help the delivery of the content of Collective Worship with the Worship Leader (e.g. reading the story, acting out, preparing role plays). The Worship Co-ordinator/Foundation Governor plan and organise collective worship across school and the wider community through both daily worship and those celebrating specific times throughout the Christian calendar.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Evaluation strategies currently used by staff and governors for assessing the outcomes of collective worship are:

- Observation of the children's attentiveness and level of interest shown during the sessions.
- Observations are conducted by staff and governors.
- Feedback from pupils.
- Observation of the children's general behaviour in and around school.

The monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship forms part of the school's programme of monitoring. This is done through:

- formal observations of Acts of Collective Worship led by all staff.
- pupil discussion with the Headteacher or Governor;
- informal observations of how pupils are putting the messages from Collective Worship into practice;
- pupils' responses and ideas during Collective Worship;
- written evidence in response to prompts which links with the Collective Worship theme;
- written and photographic evidence;
- the school's foundation governors have a role monitoring Collective Worship.

## **Visitors**

The programme of acts of Collective Worship is coordinated by The Worship co-ordinator. Visitors are supported to understand the educational aims of Collective Worship at the school and the need to avoid any proselytising. Attempts to persuade pupils to adopt a particular religious or non-religious belief are not appropriate. In general, the Headteacher is consulted before a visiting speaker is confirmed. Visitors should not speak about raising money for any cause(s) without the prior permission of the Head teacher.

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