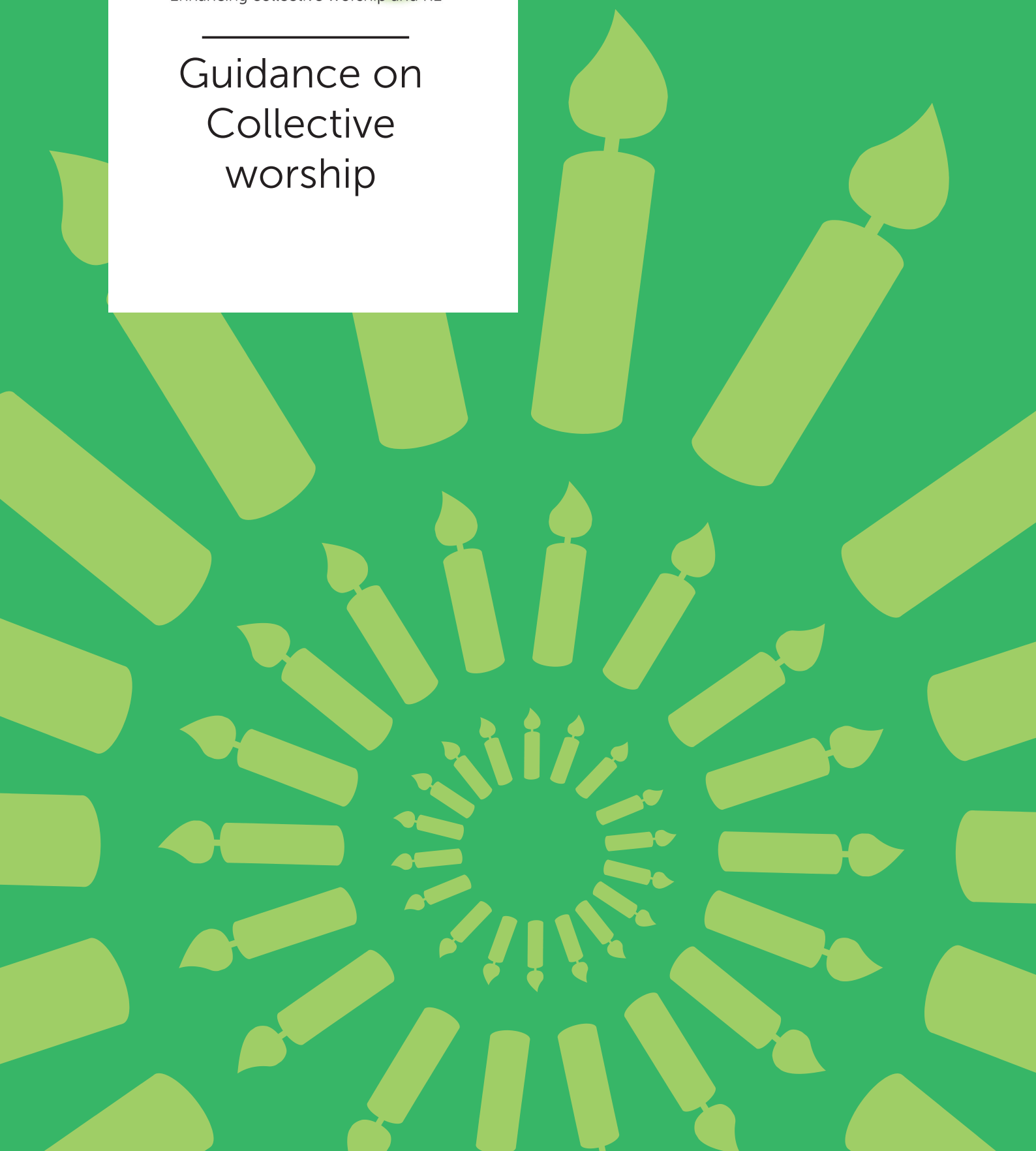


Hertfordshire
SACRE
Enhancing collective worship and RE

Guidance on
Collective
worship



Guidance for Schools on Collective Worship

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Introduction

Part of the role of Hertfordshire SACRE is to support, offer guidance and to monitor collective worship. We are delighted to introduce these new and updated guidelines, which are designed to support all those who have responsibility for collective worship in maintained schools without a religious character throughout Hertfordshire.

Who should read this document?

These guidelines will be of particular interest to governors, head teachers, those with responsibility for the delivery and co-ordination of collective worship, faith leaders and all who participate in daily acts of school collective worship. Voluntary schools - both aided and controlled - may also find some aspects of the guidelines useful.

This document recognises the good practice in the delivery of collective worship already evident in many Hertfordshire schools but also recognises that there is a need to provide additional and updated guidance to support schools in their commitment to improving the quality of collective worship.

Aims of the guidelines:

- To help schools meet their statutory requirements for collective worship
- To assist schools in the development of acts of collective worship which are educationally worthwhile
- To promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- To aid schools in preparing pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life as young citizens living in a multicultural and multifaith society.

1. The Legal Framework

The following is a brief summary of the legal requirements set out in the Education Reform Act 1988, together with interpretation offered in DCSF Circular 1/94 and subsequent acts. Headteachers and governors should refer to the full versions for more detailed information.

Legal Requirements

1. DCSF Circular 1/94 contains the current requirement for a daily act of collective worship, the majority of which should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character that is "reflecting" the "broad traditions of Christian belief" without being denominationally biased (cf Education Reform Act 1988). However, headteachers must take into account the pupils' ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.
2. This must be provided for all registered pupils of compulsory school age or above. The term 'registered pupils' includes those in the sixth form but not pupils in nursery schools or classes.
3. The act of collective worship can take place at any time during the school day and with any grouping of pupils the school wishes to use (though not faith groupings).
4. Parents in all schools have a legal right to withdraw their children wholly or partly from collective worship. Any such request must be complied with.
5. The Education and Inspection Act 2006 makes provision for pupils in post-16 education to exercise the right to withdraw themselves from the daily act of collective worship.
6. Teachers, including headteachers, have a contractual duty to attend assembly but they have the right to withdraw from collective worship and cannot be discriminated against for doing so.
7. If a school believes that the Christian character clause is inappropriate for the whole school or certain pupils within it, application can be made to the Hertfordshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for a determination order to have the clause lifted or modified.
8. In a County school it is the responsibility of the headteacher, in consultation with the governors, to see that these arrangements are carried out. In a Voluntary school, it is the responsibility of the governors, in consultation with the headteacher.

What should special schools do about providing Collective Worship?

DCSF Circular 1/94 Annex B expresses the law in relation to the involvement of special school pupils in collective worship. In terms of equality of opportunity for pupils in special schools, unless there are reasons relating to space or equipment that cannot be overcome, then special schools should follow the law in the same way as mainstream schools.

2. What is Worship?

Whilst there is a legal requirement for schools to conduct a 'daily act of collective worship'.(The 1988 Education Act and subsequent Acts), none of this legislation actually defines what is meant by the term collective worship.

SACRE recognises that schools need to clearly differentiate between corporate worship and collective worship.

Corporate worship takes place within a faith community context e.g. in Churches, Gurdwaras, Mosques, Synagogues, Temples. Corporate worship implies a community with a shared set of beliefs and values. For most faith communities worship is concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. Few schools can expect that all their members will subscribe to a set of beliefs which enable the entire school community as such to constitute a worshipping community.

School collective worship should recognise that the school community is a collection of people. Thus, acts of collective worship should be sensitive to the collective character of individual schools and to be inclusive the term must be interpreted in a way which is meaningful to the range of communities it serves. The school community will usually include people from a variety of cultural and faith, and non-faith backgrounds.

Therefore,

- The term "collective" when used in relation to worship in schools refers to the gathering together of a school group or groups for worship; it does not in any way suggest an act of worship which involves a group meeting to subscribe to any particular faith or denomination of a faith.
- Collective worship does not pre-suppose shared beliefs, and should not seek uniform responses from pupils. Collective worship caters for a diversity of beliefs and points of view, allowing individuals to respond as individuals.

A broad definition which has been referred to as worth-ship, might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to people of excellence, worthy of honour and, by extension, to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit. Worship thus defined draws on literature, music, drama, art and other sources of inspiration. It can provide a focus for thought, inspiration and reflection for pupils (and staff) whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none.

Worship of a Broadly Christian Character

The majority of acts of collective worship must be of a 'broadly Christian character', and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominationally biased. The interpretation of this aspect

of the law in paragraphs 60-63 of DCSF Circular 1/94 presents particular problems of application. Sensitivity to the faith background of pupils is enshrined in the law requiring headteachers to have regard to family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes. Thus, when according special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. For example, it may be appropriate to tell stories of the life and teachings of Jesus, but inappropriate for all pupils to be required to address Jesus directly in prayer (see Section 4).

In order to achieve an act of worship which meets legal requirements as well as educational principles, leaders may wish to concentrate on those characteristics which are shared by faiths as well as those which are specific to Christianity. These include:

- that there is one God, a supreme spirituality, the source of all life who created the world and all that lies in and beyond it;
- that the realisation of God may be found through love and selfless caring for others;
- that all relationships between human beings should be guided by love;
- that the spirit of love be used by those with power to value and care for the world and all that is in it.

In this way school acts of collective worship can become a purposeful collective spiritual experience which supports the ethos of the school.

3. Practical Considerations

The legal requirements, together with official interpretations appear to point to an intention to apply the narrow definition of worship in schools. However, schools cannot enforce what is, in essence, an inward spiritual experience. To impose an outward form of worship might be counterproductive spiritually, presenting an important religious act as meaningless and hypocritical to believing and non-believing pupils. It could also be regarded as educationally suspect, presenting prescribed answers to fundamental questions of faith and the meaning of life.

School acts of worship may, therefore, be a time of honouring excellence and exploring and sharing things of value and worth (the broader definition from section 2). But during such acts of worship pupils should be given an opportunity to worship inwardly if they wish to do so. This may be achieved through a moment or two of reflective silence during each act of collective worship. This will therefore allow a meaningful experience for all pupils whilst giving time for individuals to worship in the spiritual sense.

"A school is not a worshipping community....but rather a worship enabling Community" (B O'Keefe)

Heads and governors will need to consider the following when reviewing their practice:

- The Education Reform Act 1988 and subsequent Acts, DCSF guidance and Ofsted requirements;
- The logistics of providing a *daily* act of collective worship for *all* pupils;
- The school's own interpretation of the term 'collective worship';
- The school's own interpretation of the requirement that the majority of acts of collective worship over a term must be 'of a broadly Christian character...must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief';
- Making the experience inclusive, so that all pupils can feel part of it;
- Formulating a school policy based on the above and agreed by staff, governors and in some cases other partners in the process e.g. pupils (see Appendices for examples of school policies);
- Appointing a teacher to lead collective worship;
- Keeping records of themes and content of collective worship;
- Governors should appoint a member of the governing body to ensure that their statutory duty with regard to collective worship is carried out.

Applying for a Determination

The requirements for acts of Collective Worship that are "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" may be lifted in respect of some or all of the pupils in a school where the requirement is deemed inappropriate. Where a headteacher deems this to be the case, application can be made to Hertfordshire SACRE for a determination order. Before making such an application, the headteacher should consult the governing body who may wish to seek the views of parents.

Headteachers may apply to the Chair SACRE requesting alternative collective worship arrangements for some or all pupils or apply for the requirements to be modified for some or all pupils.

SACRE may decide, following such an application, to lift or modify the requirements and request to be informed about what form the alternative arrangements will take. SACRE will then write to the headteacher communicating the decision to accept or reject the request for a determination and state the date from which the determination should take effect. SACRE will review the determination no later than 5 years after its introduction and will consider renewal of the determination at the end of 5 years.

If a determination is accepted, it will be the headteacher's responsibility to decide what form the alternative worship will take, and inform SACRE, the Governing Body and parents. Where such a determination is made in respect to all or some of the pupils in a school, daily collective worship must still be provided for them.

Good Practice

Schools generally combine their acts of collective worship with an assembly helping to ensure that the act of collective worship takes place within a broad educational framework.

The following are features of good practice:

- Clear objectives
- Suitable timings at appropriate points in the schools day
- A variety of groupings over the course of the week
- Wide staff and pupil involvement no matter what their personal beliefs
- Use of visitors
- Substantial forward planning in terms of themes, leaders, curriculum connections etc.
- Appropriate resources
- Not over-dominated by school administration
- Generating the right atmosphere
- Not over-moralising
- A time of quiet for personal reflection/ worship
- Having guidance for visiting speakers
- A contribution to the whole school ethos
- A variety of methods

Objectives and Methods

Ideally school collective worship should encompass all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. It both reflects and nurtures the whole ethos of the school. In particular, assembly (the usual context for collective worship) develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

Each school has to respond positively to its own particular needs but all schools should see assembly as an educational opportunity with clear objectives:

- To show interest in and concern for members of the school community
- To celebrate special occasions together
- To show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and wider world
- To share appreciation of worthwhile activities undertaken by groups within the school
- To explore and review the variety of values, attitudes and standards manifested in society
- To reflect upon dimensions of human life, the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, ugly, sorrowful, solemn...

Schools may want to choose from a range of methods including:

- Pupils' contributions
- Stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/meditation
- Songs/hymns/music
- Sacred/secular readings
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence

NB The use of some of the above means of worship may not be acceptable to some faith communities

Success Criteria

Schools will wish to evaluate their collective worship against stated criteria.

Some suggested criteria are:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention and reaction of pupils
- Respect and tolerance
- Positive response to shared experience
- A sense of challenge
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well-being
- A sense of occasion
- Good order
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Staff affirmation
- Enrichment of pupils' experience

A record-keeping pro forma with a section for evaluation can be found in Appendix 4

4. Making Collective Worship Special

Many headteachers and teachers feel that collective worship should exhibit certain characteristic elements. Generally pupils should be able to appreciate that this is a special time in the day. Providing such an atmosphere is difficult and many feel that collective worship which contains specific features, such as prayer, song and other rituals can enhance the experience. Where collective worship takes place within the context of a school assembly, pupils need to be clear about when the act of collective worship begins and ends. Some helpful strategies include:

- Use of a symbol to introduce and conclude the act of collective worship, e.g. lighting a candle, showing a special object, revealing or setting up a focal point etc
- A period of silence prior to and/or following the act of collective worship
- A short piece of music to separate the act of collective worship from other school business

Prayer/Reflection

The use of prayer leads to a great deal of debate. Whether to use prayer and the appropriateness of any prayers which are used requires the greatest care and sensitivity. Many feel that what is generally understood as a prayer is a good way of focusing thoughts, feelings and wishes. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers which they do not believe.

In order to be sensitive when using prayers from faith traditions, some schools have developed various forms of introductions as alternatives to the traditional "lest us pray" which for the most part is unsuitable for school collective worship. The Redbridge handbook on school worship gives some useful ideas such as:

"And now, in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well-known prayer..."

Or, if the leader has a faith commitment,

"And now, in a moment of quietness, I want you to listen whilst I say a prayer which, as a Christian (Muslim, Sikh, Jew...) is very special to me. Those of you who know the prayer and want to, might like to say the words with me..."

Or, again,

"I am going to read you the words of a Christian (Hindu, Buddhist...) prayer that was written 400 years ago. I want you to think about the words carefully. Some of you might want to make the words your own."

In ways like these pupils are given an introduction to the notion of prayer traditions whilst not being required to respond in a hypocritical fashion. It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Song/Music

Song, as a means of creating atmosphere which unifies and uplifts, is well recognised. The difficulty in primary schools is that children will generally sing anything that their teachers ask. The difficulty in secondary schools is getting the pupils to sing at all.

There are a large number of hymns and songs to choose from but some are more appropriate to faith worship than school collective worship. For instance some people feel that hymns such as "O Jesus I have promised" are inappropriate for all except those who believe in Jesus as the Lord. Many retain the music to such hymns, rewriting the words to make them more appropriate to school collective worship.

Many primary schools have a weekly 'singing practice', which in some cases takes the place of that day's act of collective worship. Practice is important if singing is to be whole-hearted and sympathetic to the theme chosen. **The words of the hymn/song could form the focus and be reflected upon before or after singing, thereby making the time more clearly reflective.**

Pupils may be introduced to hymns and songs in a variety of ways, for example by using recordings of choirs, listening to a religious group perform, the school choir etc. This may be a suitable way of using song with secondary as well as primary pupils.

Music, generally, is an ideal way of setting an atmosphere and supporting the theme of the worship. In addition it can assist pupils' personal reflection. By using both recorded and live contributions, the whole experience is enriched. Some suggestions for general music for reflection can be found in Appendix 1

Assembly Themes

When planning school worship headteachers should consider grouping some of the times together under a theme. This gives opportunities for teachers to plan well ahead and provides a coherent framework for the year. By setting themes in advance genuine links can be made with religious festivals, school events, national and international occasions and the whole curriculum. Knowing themes in advance gives pupils the opportunity to participate more fully in both planning and presentation.

The following list, originally published in 'School Worship Perspectives, Principles and Practice' by Bill Gent, can be used when undertaking planning over a year or a term.

Achievement and talent	Good and Evil
Age	Guilt and Suffering
Aggression and Hate	
The Arts	Harvest and Thankfulness
Autumn and Harvest	Health
	Heroes and Heroines
Barriers	Humour
Beginnings	
Blindness and Sight	I believe...
Bridges	In the news
Care and caring	Jesus
A celebration of talent	Journeys
Change and decay	Joy and sorrow
Choice and Decision	
Christmas stories	Key People
Courage	
	Leaders and Leadership
Day and Night	Lenten thoughts
Desert Island Disc	Life and Death
Discovery	Light and darkness
Dreams	Love and Hate
The Easter Experience	The Message
Education and learning	Mysteries and Puzzles
Exploring the Future	
Exploring the Past	The Natural World
	A New School Year
Fashion and Trends	New Years Resolutions
Finding Your Way	
Food for Thought	One World
Forgiveness	Old and New
Freedom and Responsibility	Opportunities
The Global Village	Parents and Children
God and Gods	Prayer and Meditation
Proverbs and Sayings	War and peace
Peace and tranquillity	Ways of Seeing
A Person who has influenced me	Wealth and Riches
Pride and Prejudice	What's it worth?
	Why are we here?
Rebirth	Wonder and Awe
Red Letter Days	The Word
Rewards and Punishments	Winter and Spring
Risk	Work and Play

Roots

School and Community

School and Tradition

School Life

The Sciences

Seeing the Light

Special Books

Stepping Stones and Stumbling Blocks

Strengths and Weaknesses

Summing Up

Taking Risks

Time and Tide

Turning Points

The Unexpected

Victory and defeat

Voices from the past

The World About Us

The Writing on the Wall

Youth and Old Age

Further examples of themes for a school year can be found in Appendix 2.

5. Useful websites for collective worship

www.assemblies.org.uk

Ideas for themes and activities for primary and secondary schools

www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/assembly

Collective worship on a Christian theme

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/more/assemblies/contents.htm>

Teachers suggestions on how to deliver creative and imaginative assemblies

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/collectiveworship>

Homepage of the collective worship resources from BBC radio

Appendix 1 Some Suggestions For Music For Reflection

Beethoven	"Pastoral" Symphony No.6 "Moonlight" Sonata in G Minor 9 th Symphony	2 nd Movement Last Movement
Mozart	Piano Concerto No.21 in C Major	2 nd Movement
Dvorjak	New World Symphony No.9	2 nd Movement
Bruch	Violin Concerto No.1 in G Minor	2 nd Movement
Elgar	Enigma Variations	Nimrod
Holst	Planet Suite	
Mahler	Symphony No.5 in C sharp minor	4 th Movement

Appendix 2 More Examples of Themes for a School Year (Secondary)

Autumn Term

Start as you mean to go on
Succeeding against the Odds
Seize the Day
Grandparents' Day
Heroes
Being Organised
World Food Day
Diwali
Sharing
Remembrance
Positive Thinking
Eid Ul Fitr
World Aids Day
Human Rights
Christmas

Summer Term

The Importance of Community
Communication
Living in a Democracy
Caring for Others
Keeping Focused
World Environment Day
Teamwork
Money
Independence
Dreams, Visions and Premonitions
Achievement

Spring Term

New Year's Resolutions
Don't judge by appearances
Martin Luther King Day
Holocaust Memorial Day
Being Nervous
Friendship and Love
Ambition
Making Mistakes
International Women's Day
St Patrick's Day
Fighting Racism
Easter

More Examples of Themes for a School Year (Primary)

Autumn Term

New Things
Friends
Helping
Harvest
Sharing
Determination
Leadership
Service
Hindu/Sikh Diwali
Neighbours
Hannukah
Advent
Christmas

Summer Term

Faith
Baisaiki
Signs and Symbols
Explorers
Rules
The Earth / Nature
Listening
Happiness
Beauty / Art
Surprises
Disappointments
Saying Goodbye

Spring Term

The new year
Families
Talents
Courage
Journeys
Ramadan / Lent
Mothers Day
Wisdom
Forgiveness
Home
Teaching
Easter

Appendix 3 Model Policies

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN PRIMARY COMMUNITY and FOUNDATION SCHOOLS (without a religious character) (Note 1)

BACKGROUND TO COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT OUR SCHOOL

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian Character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”.

Families who send their children to this school are *(delete/ amend as appropriate) in the main ‘nominally’ Christian/ predominantly from non-religious backgrounds/ from a range of faith backgrounds, including Hindu, Muslim, Jewish etc/ some children are from practising Christian families, in addition, there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds.* We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

The head teacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body. Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from collective worship.

SOME DEFINITIONS

Collective worship

Worship from within a faith tradition has a very specific definition. A school community is not a worshipping community and the law recognises this by requiring “collective” not “corporate” worship. Broadly, worship in school is more appropriately referred to as worth-ship. This might encompass what is offered in a spirit of admiration, celebration and respect to God and/or people of excellence, worthy of honour and by extension to concepts, principles and conduct which are worthy of celebration as examples of the highest achievements of the human spirit.

Worship defined in this way draws on literature, music, art, drama and other sources of inspiration and reflection for pupils and staff whose religious and cultural backgrounds are of any faith or none. In this way collective worship is inclusive not exclusive.

Worship of a broadly Christian character

The majority of acts of worship must be of a “broadly Christian character”, and those that are must reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being denominational. Paragraphs 60-63 of the DFE Circular 1/94 asks schools to define this as according a special status to Jesus Christ.

If we are to be inclusive in our worship in this school, taking the family backgrounds of the children into consideration, then, when according a special status to Jesus Christ, all pupils, whatever their beliefs, need to be respected. It is therefore appropriate in this school to tell stories of the life of Jesus, but inappropriate for all children to be required to address Him in prayer.

Many of the characteristics of Christianity are shared by all the faiths. It is important to concentrate on these as well as those specific to Christianity.

VALUES AND AIMS

We believe at this school that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supporting environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in every day situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school

- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus
- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

Worship both reflects and nurtures the ethos of the whole school. It encompasses all aspects of school life and all areas of the curriculum so that every member of staff and every pupil may feel involved. In particular school worship here develops the feeling of belonging to a community which is essential for personal development and spiritual growth.

OBJECTIVES

We see school worship as an educational opportunity with clear objectives. We use this time to encourage pupils to:

- Show interest in, and a concern for, members of the school community
- Celebrate special occasions together
- Show concern for the daily happenings in school life, the local community and the wider world
- Share appreciation of worthwhile projects undertaken by groups within the school
- Explore and review the variety of values, attitudes, standards, manifested in religions and society
- Reflect upon dimensions of human life – the wonderful, beautiful, joyful, heroic, humorous, tragic, sorrowful, solemn....;
- Reflect on the way in which humankind has expressed the deepest spiritual feelings, through the creative and expressive arts, scientific discovery, religious practice, service to God and other people.

PLANNING

In this school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. When the whole school meets together (Monday and Friday) this is generally between 11.45 a.m. and 12.00 noon. On Tuesday and Thursday each key stage group meets together and on Wednesday there is a worshipful time in the classroom. Every alternate Tuesday we have a singing practice led by the music subject leader.

The headteacher usually leads the whole school worship, with a rota of other staff leading worship on other days. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership and we have an assembly committee consisting of some year 5 and 6 children and a teacher. This group comes up with many ideas and gets other children involved.

The school year has been divided into fortnightly themes which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up.

We believe that creating the right atmosphere is crucial to the quality of the worship. Therefore, the time is not over-dominated by school administration or moralising. We plan the time so that there is a variety in content and methods, allowing opportunity for quiet personal reflection/worship.

We choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

SUCCESS CRITERIA

At this school evaluate our acts of worship against some of the following:

- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of pupils
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A contribution to individual and community sense of well being

- A sense of occasion
- Good order
- Staff affirmation
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of pupil's experience

SOME CHALLENGES

Staff non-contact time

We appreciate the need for staff to have some time during the school day set aside for planning and preparation. We also recognise the value of the whole school, including staff being involved in our school worship. Therefore, staff have a rota of non-contact time which includes *the signing practice time every alternate Tuesday and the Monday assembly (this is usually led by the headteacher who is alone with the children)*.

Song/music

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. We have a bank of music from which to draw, taken from a variety of cultures and types. Likewise with the songs we sing. We are careful with our songs to recognise that there might be some words which some of our children would find offensive to sing. We have changed the words of some songs to make them more inclusive. We select our songs/music carefully to match the theme.

Every alternate week we have a singing practice. During this we take time to consider carefully the words of one of the songs and make this into a worshipful experience by reflecting on and responding to that song.

Prayer

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts. Nevertheless, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. We have developed various forms of introductions to our prayers which distances children, but gives them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian/ Hindu/ Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

Visitors

We enjoy the fresh approach which visitors can bring to our school worship, but we require them to adhere to our values. All visitors are issued with this policy and, unless otherwise agreed, will fit into the theme for the week.

(Note 2)

We have made links with some people who visit us regularly to lead worship.

(Note 3)

NOTES

(Note 1)

Collective worship in Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools with a religious character should have policies in line with the denominational ethos of the school.

(Note 2)

See SACRE Guidance and Protocols on Faith Visits and Visitors.

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/re/sacre/#visits>

(Note 3)

See Hertfordshire Faith Communities Directory 2015

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/re/general/index.shtml#Faith>

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN SECONDARY COMMUNITY and FOUNDATION SCHOOLS (without a religious character)

Member of staff responsible: deputy headteacher

PRINCIPLES:

xxx School believes that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in our worship. We value this special time in the school day for the space it gives children to develop a reflective approach to life and the ability to express their reflections in traditionally religious ways or any other appropriate manner.

It is a legal requirement that all registered school age pupils take part in an act of worship each day. These acts of worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” for the majority of the time. They must also be “appropriate, having regard to the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils”.

Families who send their children to this school are *(delete/ amend as appropriate) in the main ‘nominally’ Christian/ predominantly from non-religious backgrounds/ from a range of faith backgrounds, including Hindu, Muslim, Jewish etc/ some children are from practising Christian families, in addition, there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds.* We recognise that in asking our children to worship we have to consider the background that our children come from and it is therefore not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child’s family is respected at all times.

AIMS:

Through our collective worship we aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for children to:

- Become increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and groups within the school and wider community
- Grow in understanding of the feelings of other people in every day situations and beliefs
- Explore the language which people use to express their feelings
- Deepen their sense of wonder about the world around them
- Grow in confidence when making a presentation to the group or whole school
- Respond freely to religious and/or spiritual stimulus

- Acknowledge diversity and affirm each person's life stance, whether it be religious or not

PRACTICE:

At xxx school we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. There are xxx assemblies each week for every pupil in the school. In addition form tutors lead tutor groups through xxx readings and reflections during tutor time on the xxx remaining mornings per week.

The headteacher or other senior staff lead the whole school worship each week, whilst Heads of Year and / or Form Tutors may lead the Year Group assemblies each week. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in both planning and leadership at certain times of the year. Assemblies are sometimes discussed at School Council meetings and they are invited to submit ideas and get other children involved.

The school year has been divided into weekly themes, which encompass religious festivals, known national or international events, and aspects taken from the school calendar. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up.

Please see additional guidance on assemblies in Appendix 1

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The headteacher is responsible (under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) for arranging the daily collective worship after consulting with the governing body.
- The assistant headteacher is responsible for planning the calendar of themes and "Thought for the Day" activities on a termly basis. This is discussed by the Pastoral Leadership Group, which also provides an opportunity for Heads of Year to give feedback from Year Teams about assemblies.
- All Form Tutors follow the xxxx programme in tutor time.
- All Teaching Staff are required to attend assemblies unless they have formally withdrawn from them by putting their request in writing and meeting with the headteacher.
- Parents of a pupil have a right to withdraw their children from collective worship. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to exercise this right should consult the headteacher.
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006 makes provision for pupils in post-16 education to exercise the right to withdraw themselves from the daily act of collective worship, but not from assembly.
- The deputy headteacher is responsible for ensuring that parents are reminded on an annual basis of the content of this policy via xxx.

DISSEMINATION:

This policy is shared with all staff through xxx Handbook. Parents are advised of the policy on an annual basis via xxx.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Curriculum and Students Sub-Committee review this policy on an annual basis.

Compliance with “xxx” is monitored by Heads of year on a termly basis and the programme is reviewed every term through SLT and PLG.

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: xxx 20xx

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN SECONDARY COMMUNITY and FOUNDATION SCHOOLS (without a religious character)

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON PLANNING AND CONDUCTING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

In planning our assemblies, we choose from a range of methods, including:

- Pupil's contributions
- Sacred and secular stories/readings
- Dance/drama
- Prayer/reflection/meditation/songs/hymns/music
- Artefacts/natural materials
- Visual aids/focal points
- Dialogue/creative silence
- Visitors

SONG/MUSIC

Song/music is a very powerful means of creating the right atmosphere and unifies and uplifts the school community. Music from a variety of cultures and types is used on occasions. Music should be selected carefully to match the theme.

PRAYER/REFLECTION

The use of prayer has led to a great deal of debate. We feel that, whilst prayer is a good way of enabling children to focus their thoughts, pupils should not be required to say or affirm prayers in which they do not believe. Various forms of introduction to our prayers can be used to distance children, whilst giving them the opportunity to participate if they so desire; e.g., 'And now in a moment of stillness, listen to the words of a well known Christian/Hindu/Muslim prayer/poem/reading...' In this way we are able to use prayers from many different traditions.

It is not always necessary to have a prayer and the use of regular moments of silence and reflection provides opportunities for some pupils to respond in a personal way if they so wish.

(Note 1) Hertfordshire Faith Communities Directory 2015
<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/re/general/index.shtml#Faith>
SACRE Guidance and Protocols on Faith Visits and Visitors.
<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/learning/re/sacre/#visits>

Appendix 4 Planning pro forma

Weekly theme:

Date:

Objective:

Day & Leader	Content in brief	Resources	Faith	SMSC	Cross-curricular	Evaluation
Mon						
Tues						
Weds						
Thurs						
Fri						