

Worship and Assemblies Policy

**St Barnabas & St Philip's
Church of England
Primary School**



A POLICY FOR SPIRITUALITY, WORSHIP AND ASSEMBLIES AT ST BARNABAS & ST PHILIP'S SCHOOL

Introduction

This school is in general accord with the Diocesan policy on worship in voluntary schools.

As an Anglican school we seek to reflect the essential features within the rich tradition of Anglican practice.

We are a school which draws pupils from other denominations and from a variety of multi-faith backgrounds. We seek, in all our activities, to promote shared values and understanding. We believe that Christian love, humility, trust and reconciliation are of prime importance when meeting with people of all faiths.

The Nature of Worship

The word 'worship' is derived from the old Anglo-Saxon work 'weathscipe', which means honour. Worship in this sense could be described as an experience which is special and separate from everyday activities, in which reverence is paid to a divine power or Being, or to that which is beyond humanity. Worship in schools is necessarily going to be different from the worship offered by faith groups, where those present may be presumed to have some beliefs in common. It is for this reason that worship in schools is called 'collective' rather than 'corporate', since it must provide material to promote the spiritual development of people of all faiths or of none. Seen from this viewpoint, collective worship in schools seeks to set the individual within the context of the realm of the spiritual. It seeks to give expression to the living relationship between God and the worshipping community and between individuals within that community.

We believe that there is an integral partnership between the content and the conduct of school worship and the ethos of the whole school. We promote this by all staff setting standards as role models for the pupils, which are consistent with the Christian values we teach.

We believe in the importance of prayer in worship that is appropriate to pupils' understanding, and ideas and images that are suitable for their ages and backgrounds. However, we also believe that children can use prayers which are beyond their current understanding where the rhythm and beauty of language offer a pointer to something more to be revealed (eg 'The Lord's Prayer'). A selection of prayers that are sometimes used are included in Appendix 1).

Entitlement

There are legal requirements for worship in voluntary aided schools. The 1988 Education Act specifies that:

"All pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship" unless "the parent.... requests that he or she may be wholly or partly excused from attendance at a religious worship in the school."

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from daily acts of worship, although the school makes it clear to them in the school's prospectus that the act of worship is central to the life of the school. If however, parents finally decide to take this option for their children, we undertake to ensure that these pupils are adequately supervised, have something purposeful to do and are not made to feel isolated and 'different'.

Implementation

There is a daily Act of Worship which is broadly Christian in nature.

We believe in the importance of staff in contributing to the development of a whole-school ethos to support the promotion of Christian values. Teaching staff and support staff regularly take

responsibility for leading their own acts of class worship and whole school worship with support and advice available from the Headteacher.

Opportunities are given for pupils to reflect individually on spiritual issues and be followed and developed across the curriculum and throughout the life of the school.

As part of our Anglican heritage we:

- Observe the cycle of the Anglican year: Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter;
- Celebrate a service in rotation once a term at St Barnabas & St Philip's churches;
- Provide opportunities to discover the value of silence and meditation within the context of Christian worship.

We recognise and celebrate a diversity of approaches when conducting acts of worship both formal and informal and encourage pupil involvement where possible.

We expect that pupils will be present at acts of worship but the commitment of the school is to respect each individual's faith stance.

We affirm and celebrate pupil achievement and success once a week on one of the occasions when we meet together as a whole school.

We recognise the problems involved in conducting a whole-school act of worship for a group of pupils covering a wide range of development. Taking part in a whole-school act of worship encourages a sense of unity and identity among pupils and between pupils and staff. This incorporates a variety of class and whole-school acts of worship into the weekly cycle.

Staff are provided with guidance notes to help them structure the time of class-based worship effectively (see Appendix 2).

The weekly school cycle for worship at our school is:

DAY	VENUE
MONDAY	Whole School or Separate Infant and Junior assemblies led by a member of staff or a guest speaker.
TUESDAY	Class based led by teacher or support staff.
WEDNESDAY	Class based led by teacher or support staff.
THURSDAY	Whole school assembly led by Year groups, a member of staff or a guest speaker.
FRIDAY	Whole school with parents invited to attend, led by HT or visiting speaker.

We provide written guidelines to visiting speakers to support them with this task (see Appendix 3).

We believe that worship should be set in the context that appeals to the imagination. We promote an atmosphere in the hall or classroom that allows for a range of response that adds to the richness, variety, awe and wonder of the experience.

There will be a biannual cycle of themes for use in worship, reflecting the major themes of the Bible, the Church and the Christian Year (see Appendix 4).Review

APPENDIX 1 - A selection of prayers for use in class or whole-school acts of worship

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

From the prayer of St Richard of Chichester

O most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother:
may I know you more clearly
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day.

A prayer attributed to St Francis of Assisi

Lord make me an instrument of your peace:
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is discord, union;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be love as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal
life.

A prayer of St Ignatius Loyola

Teach us, good Lord,
to serve thee as thou deservest;
to give, and not to count the cost;
to fight, and not to heed the wounds;
to toil, and not to seek for rest;
to labour, and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing that we do thy will.

A prayer of St Patrick (adapted)

May the strength of God pilot us,
May the power of God preserve us,
May the wisdom of God instruct us,
May the hand of God protect us,
May the way of God direct us,
May the shield of God defend us.

May Christ be with us,
Christ above us
Christ in us
Christ before us
This day and evermore.

From the Holy Communion Service

Almighty God,
To whom all hearts are open,
All desires known,
And from whom no secrets are hidden:
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit
That we may perfectly love you,
And worthily magnify your holy name;
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOR OUR NATIONAL LEADERS

Almighty God, we pray for our Queen and all leaders of our country, that they may govern us wisely and well; we pray for one another, that we may live and work together in love, understanding and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

O Lord God, guide the leaders of many different countries at the meetings where they try, by working together, to make the world a better and safer place. Help them to want peace rather than power, and show them how they can share the food in the world so that no one need be hungry. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

FOR OUR VILLAGE/TOWN/CITY

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our *village/town/city*, and for every person who lives here. Help us to care more for our community, to share your love, and to stand for your truth: through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FOR GOD'S BLESSING

O Lord, open our eyes to see what is beautiful, our minds to know what is true, and our hearts to love what is good; for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

FOR OUR FAMILIES

Lord God, our heavenly Father: for our families and homes – thank you,
for your love and care – thank you,
for everything you give us – thank you:
make us thoughtful at home, make us helpful to our parents, and above all, teach us to love you more day by day; for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

FOR TRAVELLERS

O God, our Father, we commend to your keeping those who travel by land or sea or air: give them your protection on their way, and bring them safely to their journey's end; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FOR THOSE IN SCHOOLS

Heavenly Father, we pray for every boy and girl among us who goes to school, and for every adult who is a teacher: let our schools teach what is true, and make each one of us willing to learn; for Jesus sake.

Amen.

FOR FORGIVENESS

O God, our loving Father, we are very sorry for all the things we have done which make you sad: we have sometimes been selfish or bad-tempered or disobedient. And we are sorry for the things we have failed to do: for the work we did not finish, the thank you we forgot to say, the friends we did not help, the quarrel we never made up. For these and all our failings, forgive us, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

FOR GOD'S PROTECTION

'I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied, "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.'" May God's kind hand guide and uphold us all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FOR OUR HOLIDAYS

Father God, thank you for holidays; for the excitement of preparing and packing, for interesting places to explore, for new people to meet, for time to be with our families and friends. Give rest to all who are tired or overworked and are not able to have a holiday away from home. Help us to use our holidays to make new friends and to learn new things, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THANKSGIVING

We thank God for the wonderful world he has given to us, and for all his love and care:

For the warmth of the sun: O loving Father,
we give you thanks and praise.

For the rain which makes things grow: O Loving Father,
we give you thanks and praise.

For the woods and the fields: O loving Father,
we give you thanks and praise.

For the sea and the sky: O loving Father,
we give you thanks and praise.

For the flowers and the animals: O loving Father,
we give you thanks and praise.

For the families and holidays: O loving Father,
we give you thanks and praise.

For all your gifts: O loving Father,
we give you thanks and praise.

Everything around us rejoices, therefore give us joyful hearts to praise you in your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A form of prayer for use in a classroom

This simple form of prayer was developed by the Iona Community for use in small groups.

Three candles or nightlights are needed, and these should be placed on a table where everyone can easily see them.

1st leader I will light a light. In the name of the Maker
 Who lit the world, And breathed the breath of life for me.

A candle is lit and placed centrally.

2nd leader I will light a light. In the name of the Son
 Who saved the world, And stretched out his hand for me.

A candle is lit and placed centrally.

3rd leader I will light a light. In the name of the Holy Spirit
 Who encircles the world, And blesses my soul with a longing for God.

A candle is lit and placed centrally.

**All - We will light three lights. For the Trinity of love.
God above us. God beside us. God beneath us
The beginning. The end. The everlasting one.**

A moment of silence is kept.

At lunchtime the following grace is said:

INFANTS:

Thank you for the world so sweet
Thank you for the food we eat
Thank you for the birds that sing
Thank you Lord for everything. Amen

JUNIORS:

For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful. Amen

At the end of the school day the following prayer is said:

INFANTS:

Jesus, tender shepherd hear me
Hold thy little lambs tonight
Through the darkness be thy near me
Keep me safe till morning light. Amen

JUNIORS:

May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us for now and ever more. Amen

APPENDIX 2 - Leading Classroom Worship – a guide for teachers.

1. Think of a total time of ten to fifteen minutes depending on the content, but include:
 - some time for thinking
 - some time for sharing
 - some time for listening
 - some time for stillness and silence.
2. Use a focus which the pupils will learn to recognise and respect: the lighting of a candle, a vase of flowers, a picture, a piece of sculpture, a cross, a shell or another object.
3. Learn to use silence. Regularly conclude with silence.
4. Keep the session simple and short. Use some of the following:
 - a short passage of scripture
 - a story, poem or piece of literature
 - a picture, poster or slide
 - a prayer
 - a hymn or song which pupils come to know well
 - a personal account of an event or experience in your own life
 - music.
5. Invite pupils to reflect on the content of the worship either individually or in small groups, allowing for discussion and reflection.
6. Use music to begin or end.
7. A classroom act of worship may lead to pupils into a quiet, creative activity such as writing or painting.

APPENDIX 3 - GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

Although these guidelines were primarily written in mind for classroom visits, the principles are generally transferable to whole-school acts of worship. A classteacher is always present at the time of the visit.

BEFORE THE VISIT

1. It is helpful if visitors

- are familiar with the school or class, eg through a prior visit;
- are clear about their brief, and able to speak to it;
- have prepared their material thoroughly;
- know where they stand in relationship to other members of the community
- arrive promptly.

2. It is helpful if the teacher

- has provided the visitor with a clear brief;
- has given the visitors details of resources and equipment available to them;
- is aware of the demands on the visitors;
- has an alternative act of worship prepared in case of an emergency.

3. It is helpful if the pupils

- know who the visitors are and are aware of their background;
- understand the purpose of the visit;
- have framed some questions to the visitors;
- have briefed a welcome for the visitors.

DURING THE VISIT

4. It is helpful if the visitors

- use words and materials at a level appropriate to the age ranges;
- are 'pupil-friendly', ie not patronising, aware of the cultural sensitivities of some pupil, conveying a sense of enjoyment and a sense of humour, and use artefacts and visuals;
- keep to the brief given by the teacher;
- are prepared to receive questions from pupils and are sensitive to the response of the class/group to what is being presented;
- do not use the opportunity to influence pupils unfairly;
- are aware of, and help to break down, some of the stereotypes about their community.

5. It is helpful if the teacher

- is the guardian of the relationship between class and visitors, and is ready to interpret or intervene if necessary.

AFTER THE VISIT

6. It is helpful if the teacher or Headteacher

- offers feedback to the visitors on positive points of the visit, and those, which might be developed or altered and values fostering an environment of feedback and comment.

7. It is helpful if the pupils

- follow up the visit appropriately, and relate it to the longer-term education in the subject area;
- are appreciative of the visit (perhaps through letters/drawings sent to the visitors);
- invite visitor back to see children's work, as appropriate.

APPENDIX 4 – See attached BI-ANNUAL THEMES FOR WORSHIP document

Current year assembly cycle available on staff 'T' drive in 'Assembly Theme Documents' folder and look for current year file