

GUIDANCE FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

August 2021

*Church Schools serving their communities
through excellence, exploration and
encouragement within the love of God*

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Collective Worship is the heartbeat of the school, the life source, giving a foundation to all that is done within the life of the school.



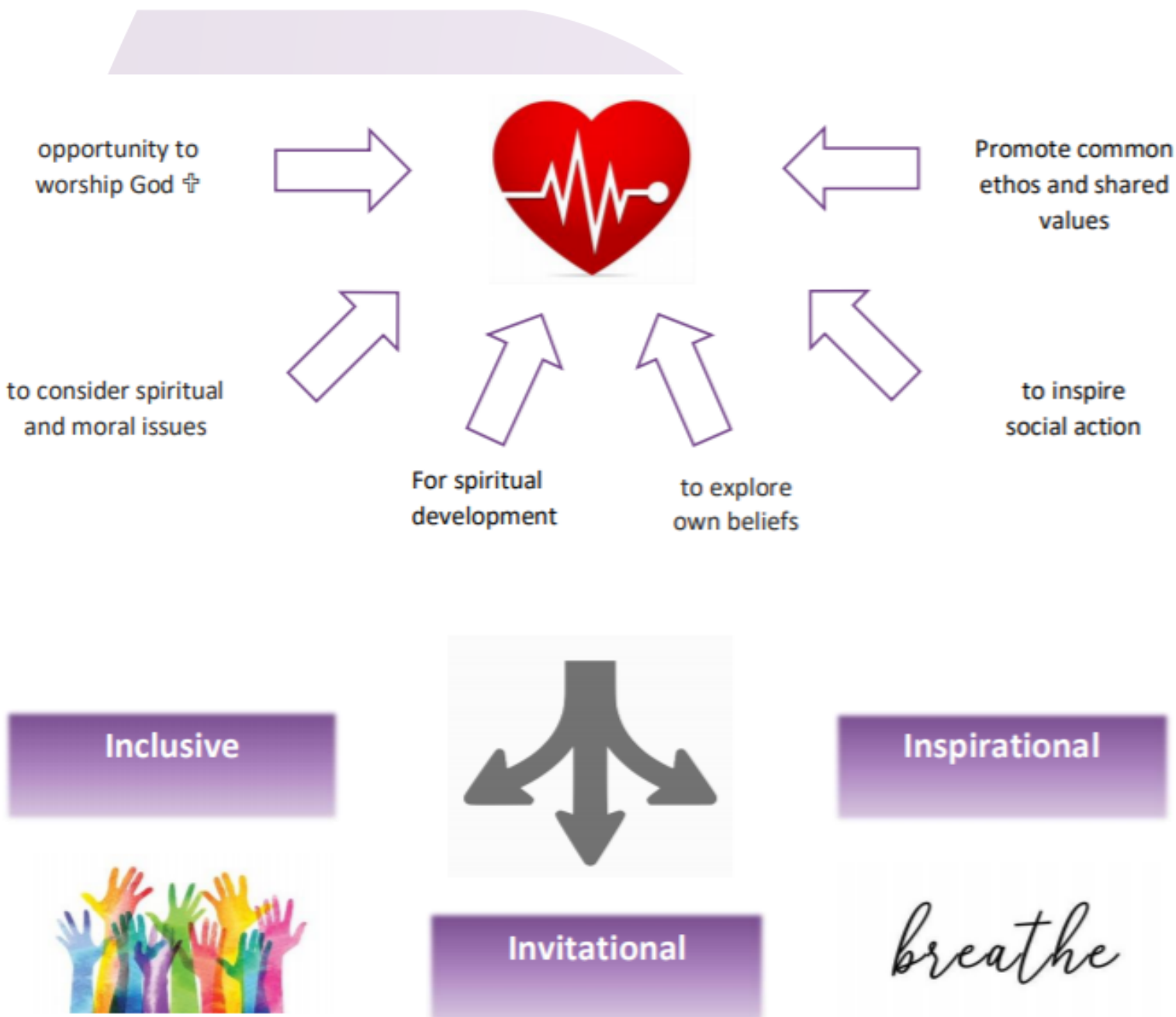
Collective worship is time for the whole school to gather and for everyone to be given the opportunity to grow spiritually, and have a ‘time to breathe’. It should be a central element of school life as well as being enjoyable and uplifting time for adults and young people alike.

At its heart, we believe that collective worship offers pupils and adults the opportunity to experience the presence, power and peace of God through prayer, reflection, singing and sharing. It is important that there is an opportunity to appreciate and respond to a variety of styles found in the diversity of the Christian church while enabling all taking part to develop an understanding of Anglican and Methodist liturgy and the Trinity.

Please see the Church Of England Education Office [Collective Worship Guidance](#) for more details.

Collective Worship: Core Concepts

Collective Worship is the ‘heartbeat’ of the school, beating away beneath everything that goes on in school



Worship can be defined as paying homage to (revering) that which is of worth ('Worth-ship.'). Religious worship is the acknowledgement of 'worth' which is attributable to a supreme being, often referred to as God or the divine.



Therefore, in Church of England schools and academies, opportunities should be provided for children and adults to offer worship to God, through Jesus Christ, if they so wish. We can never make anyone worship because it is an attitude of the heart focused on God; in a school situation we should seek to lead people to the threshold of worship by providing a setting where they may worship God if they so wish.

Collective Worship is therefore different both to school assembly and to corporate worship (see definitions below)

Collective Worship in a church school should be an expression of a school's distinctive Christian vision.

School Assembly is a gathering of the school community; it is often used to celebrate and focus on the life and values of the community itself and is without religious content.

Corporate Worship is a gathering of a body ('corpus') of believers and presupposes a particular religious commitment. When a school or groups within a school meet together for worship the activity is unlikely to be corporate worship, where the worshippers are broadly in agreement in their beliefs. Even in a school where the background of the children is Christian, the children may not regard themselves as believers.

Collective Worship is a term only used in schools and academies. It is an act of worship that should be inclusive of everybody, inspirational in nature, with an open invitation to participate. It differs in this aspect from voluntary, corporate church worship. There are no assumptions made about shared belief during collective worship, even in a church school. The 1944 Education Act requires schools 'to provide a daily act of collective worship' and it remains a compulsory aspect of daily school life to this day.

In England it is a legal requirement for all maintained schools and academies to hold a daily act of collective worship which is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'.

All schools must take note of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Section 70 and Schedule 20) which requires that:

1. All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdrawal - see Appendix 1) must on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship.
2. The daily act of Collective Worship should be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Trust Deeds of the school and the ethos statement in the Instrument of Government, and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.
3. All acts of Collective Worship in Church schools must be Christian in character.
4. Pupils can be grouped in various ways for worship such as the whole school, year groups, tutor groups, classes, or other combinations.
5. The daily act of Collective Worship will normally take place on the school premises but all schools may hold their Act of Collective Worship elsewhere (e.g. the local Parish Church) on special occasions.
6. Responsibility for the arrangement of Collective Worship in a Church of England school rests with the Local Governing Body in consultation with the Headteacher. Foundation Governors have a special role in ensuring the Collective Worship is linked to the Trust Deeds.
7. The Headteacher has a responsibility to ensure all arrangements for Collective Worship are secured.

The right of parents to withdraw their children from collective worship was established in the 1944 Act and remains unchanged. Parents retain this right in voluntary aided and voluntary controlled church schools. This means that: • if a parent/carer asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at a school, the school must comply (Sixth-formers can decide for themselves whether or not to attend, without giving a reason for doing so).

**Collective Worship is separate from Religious Education.
Collective Worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and should not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum. The act of Collective Worship must be distinctive and identifiable if it is to meet the legal requirements.**



A church school's distinctive Christian vision should be rooted in the context of the school community and should set a clear destination towards which that community is travelling. It should articulate its vision for the school community in a way that is rooted in a Christian worldview. Many schools find it helpful to read the Church of England's Vision for Education (2016) in order to better understand what we mean by a Christian worldview and a distinctive Christian vision. This document contains four key themes:

Community
Dignity
Wisdom
Hope

A Christian vision is a vision of a future in which we live well together in a community that looks like unity in diversity (cf. trinitarian beliefs about God and St Paul's teaching on the church as the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12) in which all are treated with dignity and respect (because they are believed to be made in the image of God), and all actively seek new knowledge and learning and then – crucially – show wisdom by acting on this knowledge in ways that make the world a better place (e.g. Psalms, Job, parables in the New Testament). This sort of community is truly one that can feel hopeful: a place in which all its members feel valued and empowered to be agents of positive change in the world. It is clear that we do not yet have a world that looks like this Christian vision for the future; whilst Christians believe themselves to be travelling towards this destination, they acknowledge that they are not there yet.

The key for church schools is to consider how they might be seeking to reach a similar destination in the context of their school communities. They should not be there yet, but they should have a clear idea in mind of the direction of travel and the end destination. This is what provides the school with its distinctive Christian vision.

When the SIAMS evaluation schedule talks about collective worship being “an expression of the school's Christian vision” it is helpful to think of Holy Communion as one way in which Christians seek to ‘make present’ their vision of the future, just for a short moment in time. In the act of inviting all to share in the meal Jesus shared with his friends, in the act of worshipping God and giving thanks, Christians seek to foreshadow what it will be like when their vision of the future has been realised.

In the same way, collective worship in school could be understood as a way of showing what the school's distinctive Christian vision might look like when it has been realised, just for that short moment in time. It should be a time that exemplifies community as unity in diversity – a time in which all members of the school community participate. It should be a time in which each person knows that they are valued and treated with dignity, whatever the religious or non-religious convictions. It should be a time for seeking wisdom and for feeling hopeful – it should empower all to know that they can be agents of positive change in the world. It should be, to put it another way, your school's vision realised – a moment outside of the busyness of the school day in which everyone can keep their eyes firmly fixed on the school community's direction of travel and destination.

- Collective Worship has 3 underlying principles:**
- 1. It is inclusive and contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils**
 - 2. It is invitational and respects the dignity of all participants**
 - 3. It is inspiring and combines a range of experiences.**

Invitational

Acts of collective worship will:

- nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in everyone through working for social justice
- encourage pupils to consider the needs of others through charitable service and courageous advocacy;
- nurture reflection, stillness, meditation and prayer;
- provide pupils with (age-appropriate) opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of their lives through music, images and words;
- provide a sense of occasion that is separate from the rest of the school day;
- foster an appreciation of the natural world and our shared responsibilities for maintaining it;
- develop clear partnerships between worship in the school and the wider community.

Inclusive

Our understanding of Christianity is that it is an inclusive faith which mirrors the attitude of Christ in the Gospels. It is important that everyone in attendance can be present with integrity Through their Christian character our acts of collective worship will:

- recognise and celebrate the diversity of cultures, life styles, and world views which exist in our school and local community;
- have an atmosphere in which everyone feels valued and safe;
- be appropriate for every person to attend;
- focus on issues and experiences which are relevant to the pupils;
- foster active roles of pupils, parents and members of the local community in preparation, participation and leadership.

Inspirational

Our acts of collective worship provide wider opportunities to:

- promote wide ownership of our Christian vision;
- assist pupils to have increased awareness and to reflect upon fundamental issues about life;
- enhance, complement and extend curricular work;
- develop pupils understanding of the Christian faith and Church (Anglican and Methodist) practice through appropriate Biblical and liturgical content;
- encounter and explore Jesus’ teachings and the trinitarian nature of Christian faith in God;
- identify opportunities for Christian celebration which can be associated with other school events;
- include appropriate references to and elements of other religions and non religious worldviews
- include opportunities to celebrate the academic, social, personal and wider achievements of pupils and adults;
- Include a range of people to lead worship, including pupils ;
- Timetable creative acts of worship, including the use of the local church and various groupings of pupils;
- Plan, monitor and evaluate worship in relationship to our distinctive Christian vision and our associated values;
- Opportunities for worship/prayer throughout the day.

The aspiration to provide collective worship that is Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring is underpinned by the following aims and objectives and will be monitored and quality assured through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

The SIAMS evaluation schedule states that Collective worship in a good Church of England school will do the following:

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation; and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

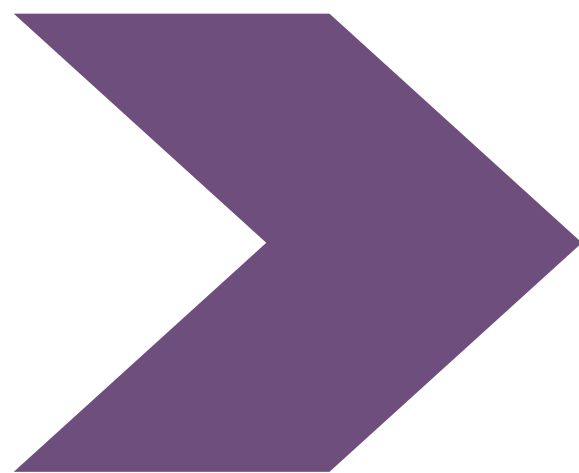
(taken from Collective Worship in Church of England Schools, 'Inclusive Invitational Inspiring' Guidance Document)

The cultural and religious diversity of a school within the Diocese of Lincoln is often dependant on where they are placed geographically. Our schools range from being located in largely monocultural areas to areas with much greater diversity. Particular care must be taken to ensure that all can be present in Collective Worship with integrity and that all children are prepared to enter a multicultural and multi-faith society.

In appropriate, schools should invite parents to have a conversation about their child's participation in Collective Worship. It is important to recognise that there is diversity within religious and non-religious world views and what works for one family may not be appropriate for another.

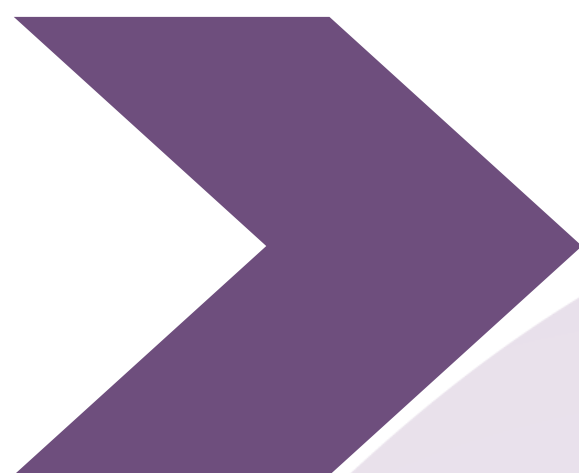


The Governing Body should:



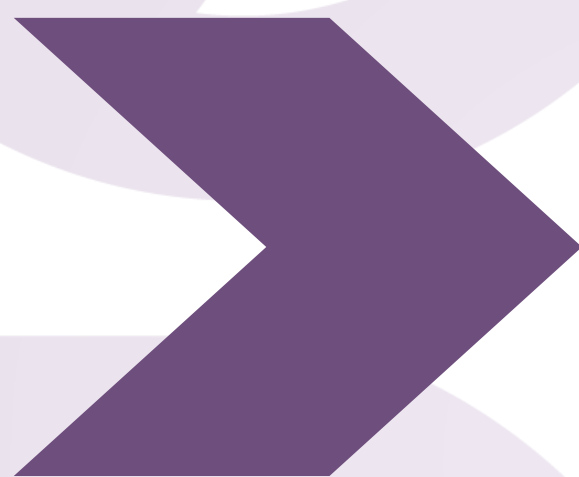
- provide a statement within the school prospectus or on the school website, which makes clear that the aims of Collective Worship within the school are based on its Christian foundation and includes parents' legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship;
- ensure that the school fulfils its legal responsibility for Collective Worship;
- in conjunction with the Headteacher, monitor the impact of Collective Worship within the school and make recommendations for its development in accordance with the SIAMS Evaluation Schedule and the the Church of England Education Office Collectove Worship Guidance.

The Headteacher/Collective Worship Coordinator should:



- provide support with the planning of Collective Worship with reference to the schools distinctive Christin vision and values
- observe acts of worship led by different people and record its on appropriateness & quality
- develop a pupil-led monitoring process
- facilitate pupil feedback
- regularly monitor and evaluate impact
- report on Collective Worship to the governing body
- implement Collective Worship development points with regard to training and resources
- ensure evaluation feeds into planning

Pupils Leading Collective Worship should:



- plan and lead Collective Worship
- suggest new ideas for Collective Worship
- contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship in the school
- promote Collective Worship within the school



The overarching planning of collective worship should be the responsibility of the Collective Worship Lead. However, planning may be undertaken in consultation with other individuals such as local clergy, headteacher, pupils and staff.



Collective worship should be treated like any other part of the curriculum when it comes to matters of planning, delivery, resourcing, monitoring and evaluation.

The content and delivery of Collective Worship should be varied (reflecting the Anglican and Methodist traditions and the liturgical year) and there should be evidence of this in planning.



In the planning of collective worship, you should ensure coverage is Christian in character and that it demonstrates your distinctive Christian vision. SIAMS inspectors will look for evidence of well planned acts of worship and the ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.

A school will need to establish both collective worship planning documents and evidence of monitoring and evaluation from the school community, including pupils, governors and school staff. However, it should be manageable and sustainable for the sake of staff wellbeing

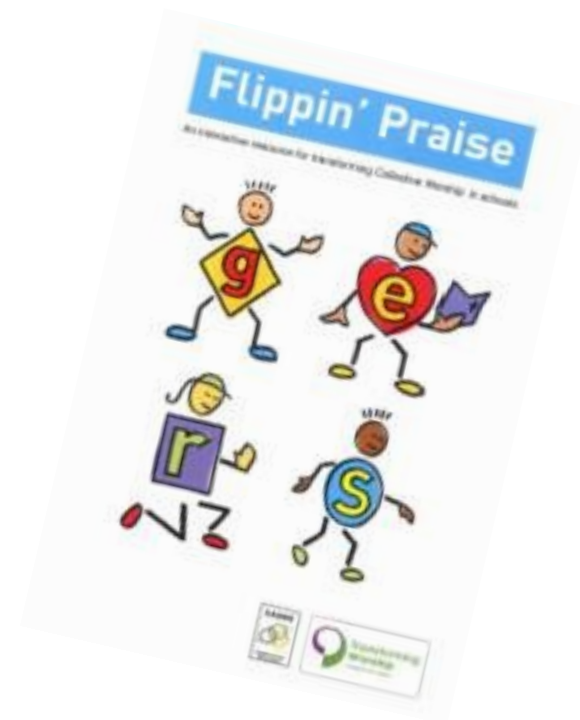
These records should be kept within the Collective Worship Lead's file (which can be electronic), which should also contain the collective worship policy, photographs, evaluations, audits, list of resources, rotas for leading worship, list of visitors, codes of conduct, letters to parents etc. This can be part of the portfolio of evidence for SIAMS that is referred to in your SIAMS Self Evaluation Form.

Use this link for suggested planning proformas



Planning

Collective worship should provide opportunities for participants to gather, engage and respond in a variety of ways. Using the language of Gathering, Engaging, Responding and Sending (as seen in the helpful planning resource 'Flippin' Praise') is a practical and helpful way to plan collective worship.

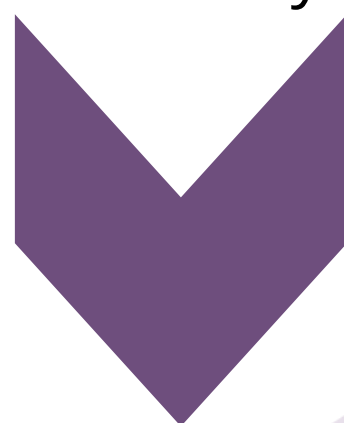


Gathering

As the school/class/year group gather, think about how they are gathering. Is there a song they can join in with, music to listen to, art work to look at.

Create a sense of welcome, a sense that this is something different to the other things they do throughout the day.

You could light a candle as a focal point and use a liturgical greeting to start the workshop e.g 'peace be with you' 'and also with you'.



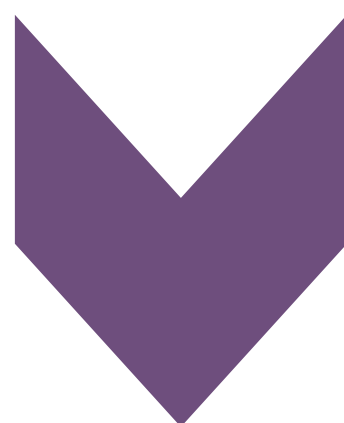
Engaging

This is usually the main part in an act of worship. This is the opportunity for pupils to engage with the Bible and theme. It is important that pupils can make connections between the biblical narrative and their own lives. Its a time of exploration and you need to think about how you intend to share the message. This might include a range of different strategies for engagement that reflects the diverse ways in which Christians express their beliefs, you might also choose to use your own experience or refer to current events.



Responding

For every pupils and adult present, some response should be supported and encouraged, whether that is through prayer and reflection or making suggestions of practical responses in school or at home. ALWAYS invite, never compel or assume, but an opportunity should be given to respond to God, for those that wish to do so.



Sending

The ending of the act of worship should be full of purpose, as people are sent out to be different and to 'do' differently. How will people be sent out of worship? Will there be special words? A blessing? A dismissal? A challenge?

Involving children and young people in Collective Worship is more than asking them to set out the chairs or read a prayer. They should be empowered to be involved with the planning, leading and evaluating of worship.

'Children are spiritual pilgrims who march through life as they seek God to ask questions, discover answers and wonder what life has ahead of them'
Robert Coles

Children are not just empty vessels that need filling; adults and children can learn from each other and children have such a richness to bring to worship. We do not want children involved in planning, leading and evaluating Collective Worship to 'tick a box' for SIAMS, it is important to recognise the many reasons why and the benefits of this involvement. Firstly, we are following Jesus example - Jesus welcome children and encourages us to be like children, our Collective Worship should do the same. Collective Worship also provides a safe space to develop skills such as public speaking, organisation, leadership, team working and many more.

Some useful questions to ask:

- Do you think giving opportunities for pupils to plan and lead worship is important? Why? Why not?
- How is pupil-led worship driven from your school's distinctive Christian vision?
- How does/might pupil-led worship enrich collective worship in your school?

The following might be useful for those wishing to explore pupil-led worship further:

[Rebecca Swansbury: William and Lucy lead Collective Worship](#)

[Diocese of Suffolk. Letting the Children Lead: Working on Worship 13](#)

[Flippin' Praise](#)

[Church of England Education Office. Spiritual Development: Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom \(2019\)](#)

When monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship, it is important to keep in mind it is the impact in relation to your distinctive Christian vision that needs to be observed and commented upon.

'How does the collective worship express the school's distinctive Christian vision?'

So what?...

Whenever you are monitoring and evaluating collective worship, it is good to ask the question 'so what'?

- the Collective Worship followed the theme perfectly today - so what?
- The children really enjoyed the songs today - so what?

Is Collective Worship actually having an impact on the participants and expressing in some way, your schools distinctive Christian vision?

Just as the heart beats in our bodies keeping us alive, how is Collective Worship functioning as the heartbeat of your school keeping the school alive? How is Collective Worship enabling you to realise and express your vision? How is Collective Worship having an impact on all those that attend (including the adults)?

It is important to refer back to our page on Collective Worship and vision. Just as Christians celebrate Holy Communion as an expression of what the Kingdom God will be like when it has fully arrived, so too should your Collective Worship be an expression of what your school community will be like when your distinctive Christian vision has been fully realised.



Use this link for suggested monitoring proformas

The Practicalities

SIAMS

In all Church of England schools and academies collective worship is inspected through SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools)

The inspection will focus on the impact of collective worship and in this strand the following question must be explored: The ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.

Strand 6: The impact of collective worship

In a Church school collective worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring.



In considering the impact of collective worship in a Methodist school, particular attention should be paid to MA1 and MA7 of the Methodist character appendix.

In this strand the following must be explored:

- The ways in which collective worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision.**

In developing collective worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring the school community needs to evaluate the extent to which worship:

 - Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection
 - Enables all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican/Methodist worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
 - Helps pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and to develop their understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God and its language.
 - Enables pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice. Leaders of worship, including clergy, have access to regular training.
 - Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

Some key things to note:

- The word 'opportunity' – provision of an opportunity to worship God is part of the Circular 1/94 commentary on the law for ALL schools to provide a daily act of Collective Worship;
- The expectation that Collective Worship is for 'all pupils and adults' – Collective Worship is to involve the whole school community; no-one should be withdrawn from Collective Worship except by parents/guardian (see - Appendix 1);
- The understanding of Collective Worship as a place for spiritual growth (Ofsted also sees it as a place for Spiritual Development) – it is an occasion with a purpose;
- The words describing levels of engagement - 'opportunity', 'experience' and 'appreciate'. Planning should take into account different backgrounds and ages;
- The use of educational terms – encounter, enable, develop understanding – we are in school, not church. Collective Worship should add to a child's education;
- The reference to Anglican as well as Christian - a C of E school should reflect its Anglican foundation in the worship it provides.

(taken from *St Edmundsbury Diocese Working on Worship 12*)

Good practice in evaluating worship

- Create a small steering group who meet to plan outline themes for the year and involve a range of leaders, from the school and the community, e.g. church leaders;
- Develop the role of pupil leaders for collective worship a group of pupils could take on the role of evaluating collective worship e.g. by completing an evaluation form;
- Classes could have age-appropriate opportunities to discuss Collective Worship with the main points recorded in class and collated by pupil leaders;
- Governors, the Collective Worship lead and Headteacher should each observe and review at least one act of worship every term;
- The steering group should regularly look at monitoring and evaluations to continue developing Collective Worship and its impact;
- The steering group should report annually to the full governing body, highlighting any recommendations for improvement and development.

Clergy and Visitors Leading Collective Worship

It is an important part of Collective Worship to have local clergy and other visitors into school to be part of and to lead Collective Worship. The Church of England Vision for Education, and therefore SIAMS, encourages community and church links for all to ‘Live life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10). Developing relationships and community links outside of the walls of the school are as important in Collective Worship as any other part of school life.

SIAMS

Within SIAMS, key questions are asked to which visitors in Collective Worship can provide answers

<p><u>Strand 1</u></p> <p>How well do leaders ensure that the school’s formal partnerships are supported, sustained and informed by the school’s Christian vision and associated values? This includes how well school leaders work with the local diocese/circuit and churches.</p>	<p><u>Strand 3</u></p> <p>How well does the school community connect its ethical and charitable activities to the school’s vision and associated values? Do leaders provide opportunities for all pupils to engage in social action and to understand how they can challenge injustice?</p>
<p><u>Strand 5</u></p> <p>How well does the whole curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to understand, respect and celebrate difference and diversity?</p>	<p><u>Strand 6</u></p> <p>Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.</p>

Visitors can greatly enhance the experience of collective worship and can support in the SIAMS process. However, in order for visitors to have the most positive impact in schools it is useful to have some guidelines in place. The following guidelines may be used and adapted as appropriate for the context of the school and for the intended audience .



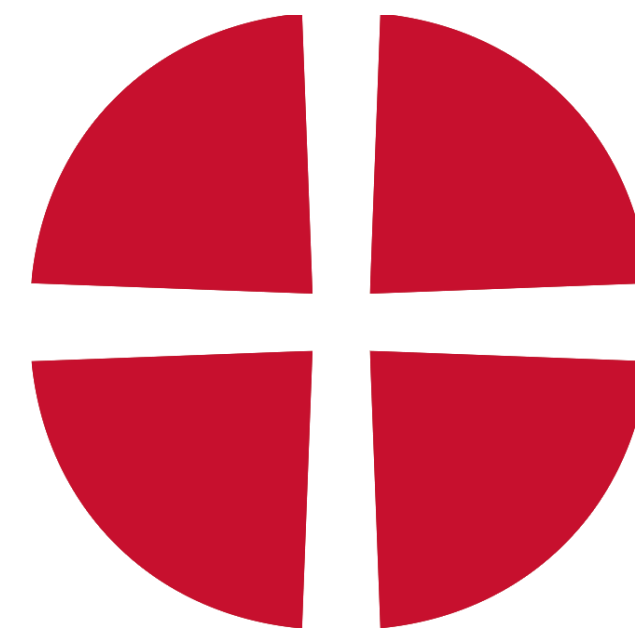
Guidelines

- All visitors/clergy are there by invitation of the headteachers (and governors). This can be extended or withdrawn at any time.
- Visitors/clergy should be given a copy of the Collective Worship policy and visitors policy in order to understand expectations.
- Visitors/clergy should familiarise themselves with the way that the school understands and engages with Collective Worship.
- The school's distinctive Christian vision is paramount in Collective Worship; as part of the school community regular visitors/clergy should know and understand this vision.
- Collective Worship is different from 'corporate' worship in faith communities. In all schools, pupils and staff come together from various backgrounds: some Christian, some of different religions and some of none. It is important that the visitor/clergy is aware of the make-up of the school population before preparing to lead worship.
- Collective worship should always be inclusive, invitational and inspirational.
- Representatives of faith communities can speak about their faith - it is important for those in collective worship to hear what they believe. However, it is an opportunity to share, and not to indoctrinate or evangelise.
- Language such as 'I believe' or 'Christians believe' is more appropriate than 'we believe' (sometimes pupils may want to explore ideas about faith further, but this is better done with a trusted adult away from Collective Worship)
- Many pupils and staff will not come from a religious background; therefore, it is important visitors/clergy make no assumptions about biblical knowledge, knowledge about the church or festivals.
- It is entirely appropriate to ask visitors/clergy to fit in with the school's plan of collective worship. This has been carefully planned to reflect the vision and values of the school and visitors/clergy can contribute to this. However it may be helpful if schools can be flexible with this if necessary.
- In preparation and delivery, visitors/clergy should try to bear the following in mind:
 - the youngest children – what is there for them to look at and enjoy?
 - size of visual aids - will all be able to see?
 - careful preparation of questions to be asked of children during the act of worship –what kind of answers are anticipated? If these are not forthcoming, can the question be rephrased?
 - how to handle inappropriate response - small children always put their hands up even if what they have to say is not pertinent to your theme!
 - time is limited!
- Language is important! Visitors/clergy should not use any language that could be construed racist, sexist or homophobic, nor should there be any disparaging of other religions or non-religious world views nor giving inaccurate information about them.
- It is important not to put pupils or staff on the spot about their own beliefs.
- It is useful for visitors/clergy to visit a school led collective worship before they lead one, this will help show the schools expectations of Collective Worship.



This guidance is based on advice issued by Helen Matter (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocese) but with amendments from Lincoln DBE

John Wesley was as much an educator as a preacher. Methodist involvement in education stems from his passion for education, which was rooted in his understanding of the Bible and centuries of Christian tradition that understands that the Church should be engaged in constantly seeking and understanding what is the truth by which we should live.



In accordance with the school's trust deed, schools or academies which have Methodist designation, schools should consider the following:

1. Pupils should learn aspects of the Methodist story, its history, traditions and identity and understand what it means to belong to the Methodist Church today.
2. 'Consider, with deep and frequent attention, the peculiar circumstances in which you stand'
3. 'The world is my parish'
4. 'Let everyone enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself'
5. 'For all, for all' and 'I am more assured that love is of God than that any opinion whatsoever is so'
6. 'Watching over one another in love' and 'the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion'
7. 'Singing the faith' and 'Hearts strangely warmed'

More details of these and how they relate to SIAMS can be found [here](#).

The 7 elements above will have an impact on the schools Christian vision and therefore all will be linked to Collective Worship. However particular attention should be paid to number 1 and 7.

As part of collective worship, schools should show:

- an understanding of the life and influence of John Wesley and its implications for present day Methodists;
- the ways in which the community life of the school reflects a breadth of Methodist practice, tradition and perspective;
- the extent to which the school is rooted in the Methodist community, local, national and global, reflecting its traditions and perspectives;
- the extent to which pupils have the opportunity to experience worship in the broad Methodist tradition: engaging and inclusive, formal and informal, traditional and modern, enthusiastic and contemplative;
- how music and singing is used as means of confidently expressing deeper values and convictions.

Useful Resources

Methodist Schools introductory video: ['Doing all the good we can'](#).

For information on the practice of contemporary Methodism and to see how Methodism is active today in worship, in Fresh Expressions of church, in foodbanks and social care, engaged in national issues through the Joint Public Issues Team, Action for Children and Methodist Homes, and internationally through All We Can and Christian Aid, click [here](#).

[Methodist Collective Worship Resources](#)

The right of parents/guardians to withdraw

The right of parents/guardians to withdraw their children from Collective Worship was established in the 1944 Act and remains unchanged. Parents retain this right in voluntary aided and voluntary controlled church schools. This means that:

- if a parent/carer asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at a school, the school must comply.
- if parents/carers request alternative worship in accordance with a particular faith or denomination for a child who has been withdrawn, schools should respond positively providing that:
denominational worship does not replace the statutory act of collective worship for voluntary schools and alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purpose of the school curriculum;
such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school.

Parents/guardians are not obliged to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal. However, a headteacher will find it helpful to establish with any parent wanting to exercise the right of withdrawal:

- the elements of collective worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part;
- the practical implications of withdrawal;
- whether the parent/guardian will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much.

A school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn from collective worship. Withdrawal does not guarantee exclusion from the religious character of the school and the governors should make clear to parents/guardians that in choosing a church school they are thereby committing themselves to their child's participation in the overall distinctive Christian vision of the school.

The school's arrangements for collective worship and the rights of parents/guardians to withdraw their children should be clearly outlined in the school prospectus and/or on the school website. Governors should phrase their statement carefully so they indicate their hope that all members of the school community will take part in Collective Worship. However, they must make explicit the parental right of withdrawal.

It is illegal for staff to withdraw children from Collective Worship (e.g. for intervention groups, music lessons, booster classes, etc) due to the requirement that an act of collective worship must be provided each day for every child.

(Taken from Diocese of Chichester Collective Worship Guidance 2020.)



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