

St Oswald's C of E Primary School



Collective Worship Policy

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Policy Statement

At St Oswald's C of E Primary School, the daily act of collective worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life. Through this and in the general ethos of the school we seek to promote our aim of developing all aspects of every child, including their spiritual awareness, so that they can flourish as the confident, rounded individuals they were created to be.

Our acts of collective worship are times where we come together to share our love of God, learn more about faith, celebrate our achievements and reflect on our mistakes together. Each act of worship is based on promoting the Christian values which permeate the ethos of the school. As such, the contributions of staff, pupils, church clergy and other visitors are valued highly.

Christian Values

Christian values are the foundation of our school ethos. Values, such as the importance of every individual, forgiveness, fairness, respect, tolerance of others, integrity, compassion, honesty and self worth, influence all that we seek to do. These values are the expression of the commandment that Jesus gave us:

John 13³⁴⁻³⁵ "As I have loved you, so you must love one another then everyone will know that you are my disciples". We also actively seek to encourage the attitudes of awe, wonder and reflection.

Values Education

We blend the teaching of Christianity with that of core values in order to create opportunities for children to develop physically, emotionally, personally, socially, mentally and intelligently so that their self esteem and well-being is sound and supported by ever growing emotional intelligence. We support them to thrive in an environment which helps them to understand their rights and responsibilities as young citizens, and promotes them to be inspired by the courage of others. The introduction of common values using clear and simple vocabulary allows children to access moral and ethical thought.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement stated in the 1988 Education Reform Act 6 (1) and 9 (3), which states the need for each child to attend a daily act of worship either as a whole school, class or group. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship either partially or wholly. Any parents wishing to do so should contact the Headteacher. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from leading and taking part in worship.

Organisation

We aim to provide a variety of worship experiences for the children. Our current schedule is as follows:

- Mondays and Wednesdays – whole school Collective Worship at the end of the day
- Tuesdays – Hymn practice and collective worship / reflection.
- Thursdays – Church worship (morning, as per timetable) or 'Inspirational People' assembly (afternoon) in alternating weeks.
- Fridays – Celebration Assembly (9.15) to which parents are invited to join us to celebrate.

The assembly/worship should last approximately 20 - 25 minutes.

Worship may be led by staff, by the Rector, by visitors from other churches or by visiting organisations such as charities. In addition, children from each class regularly lead collective worships as part of their class or a group such as digital leaders or food ambassadors.

Additionally, children come together before their lunch to collectively give thanks for their food.

Planning, Content and Detail

The themes and areas of focus for each term are planned by worship committee, in discussion with the Rector, drawing from a variety of source material. Whilst the resources are there to support whoever is leading each act of worship, they are not prescribed and leaders may use their own ideas to communicate the ideas within the plan.

For each act of worship the cross will be at the front of the assembly, next to a candle. The table will also display the vicar who wears the correct liturgical colours. Music will be playing as the children come into the hall. If there are notices to be given out, the candle will not be lit until after they have been given thus marking a distinction between assembly and worship. On Fridays, each class brings their class plant to the front to symbolise how we grow and thrive together.

As the Candle is lit we all say:

“Still, still, Jesus is near. Still, still Jesus is here.”

For most acts of worship, a worship song will be sung at an appropriate point. The worship will always finish with prayers or reflection. The prayer allows us to reflect on the theme of the worship and children can come together to say ‘amen’. A reflection asks children to think about the theme of the worship, and maybe consider a question. Their thoughts can then be shared if they choose to. This will be followed by either the Lord’s Prayer or the School Prayer, which the children can join in throughout.

The School Prayer:

***We are St Oswald's School.
Father God, guard us;
Lord Jesus, redeem us;
Holy Spirit, guide us.
Make us grow like saplings
and together form a forest
where, being blessed,
we can bless each other,
our families,
our community of Guiseley
and our World.***

On occasions, the Grace may be said to end the worship. Children are encouraged to join in they choose to do so. As the candle is extinguished we all say:

***“May the light of God shine from us
and the peace of God be with us always.
Amen”***

Children then leave the hall quietly. The highest standard of behaviour is expected during collective worship from all involved.

Our Celebration Assembly, usually on Fridays, is as much an act of worship as any others through the week. In it we come together before God to celebrate the achievements of the children and reaffirm the value of each member of our school family. Parents are invited to join us, regardless of whether their child has been chosen to receive a certificate.

The Christian Calendar

The themes of the collective worship plan often reflect aspects of the Christian calendar. In addition to this each year the school celebrates key events in the Christian Calendar through special worships. These include the Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter Services. These are special events, with participation by all the children, to reflect upon the significance of these events within the church calendar. At the end of the school year there is also our Thanksgiving Service, held at St Oswald's Church, to give thanks to God for the academic year past. On the last day of each school year there is the final assembly, at which we give thanks for the contribution those leaving the school have made.

Church education

Each year group will attend church for a number of worships each year which are intended to guide them in learning about the role of the church and traditions upheld within the church community. As they grow, children visit the church to meet with the rector in smaller groups (Y1-2. Y3-4. Y5-6) to learn about specific services which take part in church, special objects and individuals within the church to give them a wider understanding of the role the church plays in our community.

Individual Spiritual Journeys

Although our worship reflects our Christian beliefs and values, we are committed to respecting the faiths and cultures of others, showing tolerance and understanding. The understanding and practices of children from all Christian traditions are upheld and valued, and children of other faiths are encouraged to talk about their beliefs and practices. Similarly the views of those children unsure of faith or who have decided they do not believe are accepted and valued in openness and respect. In this way we seek to enable all children to develop their personal understanding of faith as they embark upon their own spiritual journey.

Governor Oversight

On a regular basis, individual Foundation Governors will attend Collective Worship, after which they will feedback their impressions to the Headteacher. These visits are not intended to be a quality judgement on those leading the act of worship, as this goes against the spirit of worship itself. They are instead intended to assist the school in ensuring that every act of worship is accessible and engaging for those participating.

Pupil-led worship

Pupils will help lead the important parts of the Monday and Wednesday collective worship sessions. A child helps conduct the candle lighting prayer ceremony and the extinguishing candle ceremony. Year 6 children support whoever leads the worship in setting up the hall and managing the music and presentations. Groups of children may lead worships with a supporting adult for specific themes and causes, or to help introduce new whole school initiatives. The worship committee puts together a timetable of pupil led worships.