

# Thurnham C E Infant School



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## Collective Worship Policy

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Members of Staff Responsible	Miss N Saunders
Position	Christian Distinctiveness Lead
Dated	September 2021
Date of next review	September 2022
This policy is underwritten by our school Christian values of Kindness, Trust, Sharing, Respect, Love and Friendship. These form an integral part of all teaching and assessment at Thurnham CE Infant School.	

## Introduction

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our vision and associated values of Thurnham CE Infant School and celebrates the central role that each child has to play in their community. Our worship reflects the variety of traditions found in the Church of England, and will recognise and follow the Christian liturgical year. The daily Christian act of worship is central to our ethos and is supported by all staff and governors. It makes an important contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole school community.

## After Covid 19 – From September 2021

As we restart the academic year 2021-22 we have been able to start gathering as a Key Stage for a daily act of Collective Worship in the school hall. The 180 children have never experienced Collective Worship in the hall and have been trained in the first few weeks of term in the purpose and behaviors of an act of Collective Worship.

To ensure the act of Worship is non confessional we are now inviting a Year 2 child to start our Worship lighting the candle and starting 'This is the day the Lord has made'. Children are invited to participate in prayers and to sit respectfully if they are not participating.

## What is Collective Worship?

Legislation requires schools, including Voluntary Controlled schools, to conduct daily acts of Collective Worship. However, the legislation does not define what is meant by the term 'Collective Worship'.

*"... Worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'. (DfE Circular 1/94 para 57)*

**Corporate worship** assumes a shared set of beliefs and values, i.e. a worshipping congregation meeting on a Sunday, where the worship is confessional and evangelistic (to spread the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness).

**Collective worship**, in recognising the collectivity of all participants, can make no such assumption that all have the same beliefs and values.

Collective Worship should be:

*"Appropriate to the family backgrounds of the pupils and their ages and aptitudes." (DfE Circular 1/94 p.22)*

Collective Worship gives pupils and school staff the opportunity to:

- Engage in an act of community
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God
- Be still and reflect
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ through Biblical texts
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes
- Share each other's joys and challenges
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar

In line with the requirements of the requirements of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) schedule, we aim to ensure that collective worship

- a) Offers the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- b) 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 and festivals.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.
- e) Encourages local church community partnerships to support the school effectively in developing its provision for collective worship.

### **The Anglican Christian Tradition**

The following are shared as Christian elements of collective worship:

- Exploring the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Using the Bible for inspiration, stories and guidance
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Saints Days amongst ordinary days
- Learning and saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the blessings in common use
- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs from traditional to modern
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection

We may also use elements which are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship
- Using Anglican sentences and responses at the beginning and end of worship

### **Implementation**

Collective worship is planned by a variety of stakeholders including Christian Distinctiveness, Worship Warriors, the incumbent and the Children and Youth Minister of our local church and external visitors in consultation with the collective worship leader (this falls within the Christian Distinctiveness leads role). This act of worship can take place at any time of the school day and in any regular school grouping e.g. whole school, key stage or class. Our school plans systematically and cohesively using Canterbury Diocese planning and other recommended resources which is adapted and changed to meet the needs of our community. This ensures that there is a shared understanding of the long and short term planning of worship and this enables continuity. Visitors to our school are asked to read and comply with our school visitor and safeguarding policies. This should include discussing the content of any worship with a member of the senior leadership in order to ascertain its suitability for the school community. Visitors are never left alone with children as the supervision of pupils remains the responsibility of school staff.

## **We meet**

Worship is held every day for a period of 15 minutes with the exception of the regular Year Group Celebration time which may last longer than this. Class Worship occurs when another Year group is having their Celebration time. These sessions are planned by the lead and are consistent across the school.

Themes for Worship are lead from your Christian Values, the time of the year both within the school and the life of the Church and from Canterbury Diocese guidance as required.

The Worship rota is created termly and are shared with all staff including the Church team who deliver KS 1 worship sessions on a weekly basis. From Term 3 they also lead EYFS Worship on a regular basis.

Worship is led by the Head Teacher and the Christian Distinctiveness leader. Other members of SLT deliver Worship when required to do so.

The Family Trust deliver a termly worship from their annual programme, when Covid restrictions allow and the school are receiving external visitors again. They also deliver a Christmas based pantomime to the whole school in December.

Celebration time is also held for each year group and parents of the children selected for certificates are invited to attend. Children's names are recorded in a Celebration time file. A candle is lit and a familiar liturgy is said at the start. It includes a prayer and a song also. It is a lovely time for the celebrated children to share their success and the school Worship practises with their parents. This is started in Term 1 for KS1 and Term 2 for EYFS. During this year the start date will be later due to restricting numbers onsite.

Collective Worship is organised using a variety of groupings, allowing greater flexibility to meet the needs of all pupils as well as the needs of the school. Whole school Worship is a lovely occasion, celebrating belonging to our school, whilst class-based Worship is more intimate and informal, reinforcing the closeness of the class group through Christian teaching. A candle is the focus of all these Worship times.

Foundation Stage children have Class Worship initially, in their own familiar classroom with their teachers and TAs. From Term 2 they have a weekly year group Worship time altogether in the music room based on the Citizenship Time. From Easter they attend church led Worship on a Wednesday morning after they have fully settled into school life.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including (eg: music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT).

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- *Gather* – we welcome the community with music , liturgy and the lighting of a candle
- *Engage* – we share a bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message
- *Respond* -- pupils discuss, share , reflect , pray or sing
- *Send* – we share the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle.

The daily act of Worship is an important part of the ethos and values of Thurnham School and is linked to the Christian Vision which states:

Strapline:

With God we learn to love and love to learn.

Christian Vision:

Thurnham School is a caring Christian community where everybody is valued and encouraged to flourish within a questioning, collaborative, creative and loving environment. This is rooted in Jesus teaching and acceptance of all, for example in the parable of 'The Lost Sheep'.

The daily act of Worship provides a daily focal point in school life for promoting all that our school stands for. It is a time of affirmation and celebration, encompassing awe and wonder, stillness and silence, whilst introducing children to formal and informal worship. We aim to be sensitive to the needs and experiences of all pupils taking into account their age, ability, race, ethnicity and family background including religious observances. Through our Christian beliefs, values and practices we aim to contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the pupils. During our Worship time we introduce children to various broad aspects of Christian beliefs, practices and customs in accordance with the Diocese guidelines.

We are mindful of the variation in personal spiritual styles and provide a range of creative opportunities including (*eg: music, silence, symbolism, drama, use of IT*).

Our worship consists of 4 stages:

- *Gather* – we welcome the community, for example, (*with music, liturgy and the lighting of a candle*)
- *Engage* – we share, for example, (*a Bible reading, followed by an activity to engage pupils with the Christian message*)
- *Respond* – pupils, for example, (*discuss, share, reflect, pray or sing*)
- *Send* – we share, for example, (*the message of the worship again and ask pupils to think about how they will affect their day / learning/ behaviour. We close with liturgy, final prayer, music and the blowing out of our special candle*)

### **Expectations of pupils**

Worship warriors are starting to plan and lead worship. They work with the collective worship leader after school on a Wednesday 3.10-4pm, to develop their own understanding of worship and to design a worship to support the spiritual development of their peers.

### **Developing Worship**

The collective worship leader attends regular professional development with Canterbury Diocese and accesses a wide range of resources to ensure that worship is both inspiring and engaging.

### **Self-assessment and Inspection**

Our school regularly evaluates our acts of collective worship and the impact it has on the school and its wider community. This involves monitoring by school leaders, staff, pupils and governors in order to grow and develop. We also welcome the contributions of parents and pupils through our questionnaires, which are reviewed and considered on a six monthly

basis. These are shared with our Church steering group including the incumbent and the Foundation Governors and plays an integral part in developing the spiritual growth of the school. Worship is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in consultation with the Diocese of Canterbury (SIAMS).

### The legal requirements of collective worship in Voluntary Controlled schools.

- Be conducted in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deeds of the school and Instrument of Government and should be consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England
- The Governing Body should ensure that all pupils **each day** engage meaningfully in a real act of Christian worship which is in accordance with the faith and practice of the Church
- Arrangements for collective worship, in foundation schools of a religious character, are the responsibility of the Governing Body, after consulting with the Headteacher (*DfE Circular 1/94 para 52 & 53*)
- All acts of worship in Church schools must be Christian in character (based on Biblical teachings)
- All registered pupils (apart from those whose parents exercise the right to withdraw) must on 'each school day take part in an act of collective worship'

### Christian Values

All staff aim to communicate and exemplify our six Christian values and beliefs that are focused upon in each of the six terms a year. These values are:

- **Friendship – Linked to the Man Lowered Down Through the Roof.**
- **Kindness – Linked to the Good Samaritan.**
- **Trust – Linked to Noah's Ark.**
- **Love – The Prodigal Son**
- **Respect - Jesus Calls His Disciples**
- **Sharing – Linked to Feeding the 5000.**
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Early Years Worships at the start of the year focus on the Christian Values and how these impact on the children's life in the way they impact on Christians and on Jesus. They will be encouraged to uphold these values in school and in their daily lives. A display in the Entrance highlights all the Christian values, as a reminder to the children there is a linked bible story and also some songs. The values and vision are reinforced in Worships and also in the class room during conversations with the children.

Acts Of Worship Times	Content	Led By
Monday, 9.10am	Y1,Y2 Start of the weeks theme of worship from Diocese planning.	Head teacher C.James
<b>From Term 2 whole Yr group not class.</b>	<b>Year R Class Worship</b>	Reception Teachers
Tuesday 9:10pm	Term 1 onwards - Y1,Y2 Celebration Time	Head teacher C.James
Until visitors into school resumes this will not be celebration but second day of themed worship for the week.	Term 2 onwards – EYFS, Yr1 and Yr2 Celebration Time	
	Term 1 - Year R Class Worship	Reception Teachers
Wed 9.10am	Y1,Y2 Church Visitors Act Of Worship on chosen theme (Rec join after Easter) Year R class Worship	Church leaders
		Reception Teachers

From Term 2 whole Yr group not class.		
Thursday, 9.10am  From Term 2 whole Yr group not class.	Y1,Y2 Act of Worship on chosen theme/Family Trust  <b>Year R Class Worship</b> led by teacher	Family Trust/Christian Distinctiveness lead  Reception Teachers
Friday 9.10am	Belonging To God's Community (including Birthdays, Awards, Behaviour and Safety	Head teacher C.James

**Special Worship Times - These will happen in a format of either virtual or live dependent upon current Covid situation.**

There are also special Worship times held throughout the year when parents and governors come to join us. The children write prayers for these acts of Worship. We have a harvest service for Years 1&2 and their parents. Each year group does something special for Christmas, with Year 2 having a Carol Service at Holy Cross Church. The highlight is the special candlelit Worship time in the hall where the whole school attends, many candles are lit, songs are sung and a theme is explored. It is a magical time. Easter is celebrated with a special act of Worship to which parents are invited. We have a Leavers' Service with singing, prayers (written by the children), acting and computer input, contributed to by Year 2 children, to mark their transition to the next stage of education. The service celebrates and gives thanks for their three years at Thurnham where they have all been a special part of the school. We have an annual whole school service at Holy Cross Church, when we walk the whole school to the church for Worship. This has become an annual feature of our Worship programme in the Summer term.

**Links with spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and the wider curriculum**

The themes for Worship and the observance of times for reflection are also included in curriculum plans and in the personal and social development activities at Thurnham. We try to provide opportunities for spiritual experiences, building on our infant children's natural delight and wonder in the world around them.

Through circle time, and using SEAL resources, we encourage children to reflect on social, personal and moral issues, and develop an understanding of themselves and their peers. **SEAL** promotes social and emotional literacy in children and equips them with the skills they need to lead a healthy, happy life. We foster their growing confidence and self-esteem.

In all areas of school life we endeavour to provide a caring, supportive ethos, where children are prepared to take risks and explore their potential and new areas of learning.

**Opportunities for Prayer**

There are always prayer times in Worship, and children are introduced to the Lord's Prayer, school prayers, response prayers, and special prayers relating to the theme of the Worship. Children say a prayer at the end of both morning (grace) and afternoon sessions (a home time prayer which is said or sung). Children write their own prayers for Worship times placing them in the prayer box in the entrance hall. There are prayer request forms which the children use to request prayers at Morning Prayers at the church, these are collected weekly and form part of the church prayer list.

**Opportunities for Reflection**

The school has an external area for reflection which is available to all children and staff. The Curate introduces reflection to EYFS when they start school and revisits it throughout each term with the whole school. This area provides a peaceful view away from the school buildings and playground with relevant materials for holding during personal reflection, e.g. acorns and conkers in the Autumn.

**Equality and inclusion**

Every child has equal access to our worship, regardless of gender, faith, culture, ethnicity, and ability. Pupils with significant special educational needs are supported by their individual assistant to allow

them full access, using signing or any support strategies necessary. Gender and cultural differences are represented positively and sensitively, and resources for Worship are selected with these considerations in mind. An effort is made to explain issues simply, whilst challenging children to think deeply about complex concepts to encourage them to think carefully about their own ideas and those of others. We have a broad and inclusive approach which supports the development of the ethos and values of the school community and which enhances community cohesion.

Everything we do in school promotes the well-being and development of the 'whole child', and Worship provides a time of peace and reflection in a busy school day. We also have a reflection seating area in the corner of the playground. Our daily Worship forms an important part of the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Health, Safety and Well-being**

In Collective Worship, we follow the school's health, safety and well-being policy. For example, appropriate care is taken when using lighted candles and electrical equipment. In line with our 'net-safety' policy any internet resources used must be checked by the leader prior to their use in act of Collective Worship. In the event of fire all pupils are familiar with exit routes from the halls and other areas of the school where Collective Worship takes place. Visitors are not left unaccompanied with children. Special Collective Worship with particular risks, e.g. the Christmas Candlelight Worship, has a risk assessment to ensure safety of children and staff.

### **Parental Withdrawal**

Worship is regarded as special time which wholly reflects our ethos as a church school. It is an inclusive opportunity for those of all faiths and none. We respect the right of parents to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents. Parents wishing to withdraw their children from acts of Collective Worship meet with the headteacher and Christian Distinctiveness lead to discuss.

### **Responsibilities for Collective Worship within the school: (including school self-evaluation)**

**Headteacher:** Mr Christopher James

**Christian Distinctiveness Leader:** Miss Natalie Saunders

**Link governor:** Mrs Sue Jackson and Mrs Juliet Mee

**Church Steering Group:** Mr Christopher James, Reverend John Corbyn, Reverend Cathrine Ngangira, Mrs Juliet Mee, Miss Natalie Saunders, Mrs Becki Mckintosh, Mrs Julie Pennells and Mrs Sue Jackson