



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”*. Our school vision is: **To learn, aspire, believe and hope through our Christian faith.** This is underpinned by the words from **1 John 4: 11 – Dear friends, since God so loved us, we ought to love one another. No-one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.**

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. Our Christian vision provides a solid foundation for how we teach, learn and communicate – following in the examples of Jesus and using the wisdom and stories from the Bible.

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 have a right to withdraw their child 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wholly or partly excused from attending collective worship at the school the school will comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent or carer who wishes to exercise this right should consult the Head Teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from worship.

DEFINITIONS

Collective worship

Worship from with 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 Barningham CEVC Primary School that collective worship both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. As a church school faith is central to our ethos and values. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child, spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and Barningham CEVC Primary School 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 the other people in everyday 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 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, 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 – e.g. 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

At Barningham CEVC School we combine our acts of worship with assembly, helping to ensure that worship takes place within a broad educational framework. There is a daily assembly. Assemblies are open to all and led by our oldest children.

There is an assembly rota and all teaching staff have a role in leading assemblies. Open the Book storytellers retell Bible stories (Fortnightly), a member of Hopton Free Church and the Rector from the Parish church of St Andrew lead some assemblies. Worship takes place in the local parish church of to celebrate key Christian festivals.

The school year has been divided into half termly themes based on the **Values for Life** topics. Staff leading worship can then plan around the themes and a development of ideas can build up. Reflecting circles are used at the end of each half term to draw together thoughts from the Collective Worship. The children have an interactive board asking 'I wonder' questions to engage. Collective worship involves children through a combination of:

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

SUCCESS CRITERIA

At this school we 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.

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 select our songs/music carefully to match the theme.

Prayer

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.

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.

Visitors

We have strong links with St Andrews Church and the local incumbent takes assembly on a regular basis. Hopton Free Church lead a Splat! Group for the children after school in the spring term. Members of the team also lead collective worship. The Open the Book group also take assemblies. These experiences are stimulating for pupils and are very well received.

Signed: Frances Parr

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