St John's Church of England Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

Gather, Grow, Go
The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13: 31-32)

Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body: May 2026

"To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God".

William Temple (1881-1894)

1. Introduction

Our collective worship policy strengthens and supports the Christian identity of our school, reaffirms our living and learning values and celebrates the contribution that each child makes to our community. Worship will reflect 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.

2. Aims

Collective worship at St John's will support the school's Vision Statement, by providing opportunities for children and staff:

- To explore a relationship with God in Jesus Christ.
- To reflect on values that are of a broadly Anglican Christian tradition, whilst recognising the validity and importance of other Christian denominations, religions and belief systems.
- To consider spiritual and moral issues and, through reflection, raise awareness of the ultimate questions of life relating to matters of faith.
- To reflect on their own beliefs.
- To deepen and widen the experience of those of 'faith' and encourage those of 'little or no formal faith' so that they begin to feel for themselves something of what it means to worship.
- To develop an enquiring mind and express and explore their own views openly and honestly.
- To develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values. The common good.
- To foster an awareness of the world around them and a sense of their place within it.
- To develop a respect for and an understanding of different beliefs.
- To develop a sense of sharing and belonging through different groups of children coming together.
- To reflect and discover – coming together as a community, growing together spiritually, and going back out into our homes, wider community and the world.
- To develop a sense of ownership over the worship at their school, including stepping into roles of leadership within worship.

3. The Anglican Christian Tradition

The following may be described as shared Christian elements of collective worship:

- Using the Bible, as a source of knowledge and inspiration for themes and stories.
- Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saints Days, learning and saying prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer.

- Singing a wide variety of hymns and songs including different styles and traditions.
- Experiencing Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning e.g. cross, crucifix, bread and wine and candles.
- The use of prayer, silence and reflection.
- Using Psalms with simple responses

Whilst these are more distinctively Anglican:

- Using prayers from Common Worship.
- Using Anglican sentences and responses e.g.
  The Lord is here / His Spirit is with us.
  Peace be with you/ and also with you.
  Go in peace to love and serve the Lord / In the name of Christ, Amen.
  The Light and Peace of Jesus / Thanks be to God
  God is good / All the time / All the time / God is good
- Using Collects as a focus for worship.
- Celebrating Eucharist.
- Encouraging links with the worship of the local Parish Church.

4. Implementation

Collective worship is a legal requirement. Each school must provide a Christian act of collective worship for all pupils every day. 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. All worship must be invitational and offer children opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and how they relate to topic.

5. Inspection

Worship is inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act (SIAMS – Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools).

6. Parental Withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their child/children from acts of collective worship on grounds of conscience. However, as collective worship is central to our ethos, we would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this decision with parents.

6. Governance

Governors attend worship throughout the year and monitor the impact of worship on the pupils and the wider school community.

7. Planning Worship

Worship will be planned termly by the Collective Worship leads with support from the Diocese planning documents and guidance. Worship plans will be shared with all staff as an overview of the term, in order to allow for cohesion within the worship sessions in the hall and class worship.

8. Junior Worship Leaders

Once all children from year 3 upwards are given the opportunity to apply, Junior Worship Leaders are appointed to their post. Continued opportunities for training, chances to lead some of the worship sessions and support the Collective Worship Lead to plan sessions are a vital part of promoting a sense of ownership and purpose within worship in their school.

Appendix

Inviting Visitors to lead collective worship

When briefing visitors for school worship, make sure you tell them:

- Who exactly will attend, whether it will be the whole school or a section of it, and if so, which section
- What the school's aims, ethos and policies are
- How long the speaker is expected to talk for (10 – 15 minutes)
- The current worship theme and context for the speaker - what has already been done and what will be done later in the term
- How pupils and staff are normally involved in collective worship
- What resources or hardware are available to them, should they so wish
- Exactly how much their contribution will be - is it just the talk or will they be asked to choose the song and lead the prayers and remember to give them plenty of notice (visitors that have experience in religion will still need time and guidance to help them prepare)
- Invite them to attend an act of collective worship beforehand so they may see how the school conducts them, or, if this is not practical, lend them a copy of the collective worship policy document
- Some visitors may also need to be told that collective worship is not an appropriate vehicle for hard sell evangelism, and that inclusive language ("we all believe….") is to be avoided
- Visitors who are regularly involved in collective worship should appreciate sensitive feedback on the appropriateness of their contribution to the school worship programme.
- A visiting speaker should join and lead worship with the support of a member of SLT or Collective Worship Leader in line with the school safeguarding policy.