

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Collective Worship Guidance

September 2017

Our school is situated within an increasingly diverse community, reflecting a multi-faith and multi-racial community, which we recognise and value. The school aims to reflect the local community while ensuring that the Christian foundations of our school are still maintained.

While St Mary's is a Church school we are committed to respecting individual beliefs. Upon entrance to the school, parents/ carers are made aware of the Christian basis of our teaching. It is therefore unlikely that parents/ carers would wish to exercise their legal right of withdrawal. However, should such a case arise, the parents/ carers concerned should consult the Head teacher.

We celebrate the cultural diversity of all the members of our school and have a cohesive community. Whilst collective worship will always reflect the Christian ethos of our school, we respect and acknowledge the variety of religious observances which are represented in our school and within the wider community.

Mission Statement

St Mary's Church of England Primary School aims to provide a caring, stable, stimulating environment where all children can develop to their full potential. Staff are committed to ensuring that the children's time at school is productive and successful. We aim to raise achievement in all aspects of the curriculum; developing self-confidence, motivation, self-reliance and co-operation.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and serve the local community by welcoming children from all backgrounds and faiths. Whilst our ethos is positively Christian, we value and respect the diversity of our community and aim to set all children on life's path through compassion, thoughtfulness and understanding to one another and respect for one another's differences.

We believe that parents and teachers have a responsibility to ensure that children leave school with:

- good basic skills in English, maths and ICT
- a love of learning
- good social skills
- a sense of responsibility towards society
- the confidence to stand up for themselves
- the knowledge that they are special in God's eyes

so that they are well equipped for a successful future.

St Mary's Motto

Go shine in the world!

Our school motto is 'Go Shine in the World'. When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12. We, at St Mary's, "shine" by following the example of Jesus.

Our school Christian values are:

Perseverance, Courage, Forgiveness, Thankfulness, Responsibility, Truthfulness, Equality and Justice.

These values underpin everything we do and are reflected in the way the whole school community works together.

Nurturing spirituality

Children are capable of deep spiritual experiences from an early age. Before they even find words to express it they become aware of something other than themselves and their small worlds, something that is inspiring and good. An understanding of God is already within children and we are asked to give them the verbal vocabulary to express what they already experience.

Through worship and through everyday experiences, children come to know that they are not alone in their spiritual beliefs and that there are ways of communicating with and about their spiritual nature.

What is worship?

Worship is the giving of honour and praise to God who is most worthy of it. Worship is a response to our experiences of life.

What is prayer?

Prayer is communion with God. It involves listening as well as speaking in thanks, praise, petition and blessing. Prayer can be an individual or communal activity. Prayer can use words that others have composed or words of our own. Prayer need not involve any words at all.

What is reflection and meditation?

Reflection and meditation are used to develop our spiritual nature through reflecting on the presence of God in the world and in scripture, and encouraging children in the silent contemplation of the wonder of God.

Worship in our school

The school holds a daily act of collective worship.

Our acts of worship are planned in advance and reflect the liturgical year.

We acknowledge that people of faith worship in a variety of ways and at St Mary's we recognise this diversity of practice.

The importance of the Bible and the Church as the foundations of Christianity are also celebrated.

Shared Christian values including perseverance, courage, forgiveness, thankfulness, responsibility, truthfulness, equality and justice enrich the daily act of worship.

Pupils of other faiths are encouraged to worship God in their own way.

The range of opportunities for collective worship in our school

- Gospel assembly - following up on the gospel teaching in church from the previous Sunday.
- Values assemblies – these are held weekly for the whole school. They focus on one of our core Christian values each week and are related to gospel stories.
- Celebration Worship - this is a time to share and celebrate school and individual achievements e.g. special mention certificates, person of the week certificates and attendance awards, sporting achievements etc.
- Children Leading Worship - this takes place once a week in classrooms in all year groups throughout the school.
- Christian Meditation - this takes place in all year groups every day after morning break times.
- Class masses or liturgies - these are led by our parish priest. They take place each term from year 3 to year 6. Parents are invited to join us.
- Class prayers- these are led by our parish priest. These take place each term in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. Parents are invited to join us.
- Daily prayers at the start of the day, before lunch and at the end of the day.

We also celebrate the major Christian festivals throughout the year. Parents/carers are invited to join us at school. These include Advent, Christmas, Lent (which itself includes Ash Wednesday, Holy Week/ Easter), and Harvest.

KS2 children undertake a 'Stations of the Cross' visit to the local church once a year.

Themes of Worship

Throughout the school year our themes of worship are divided into two main strands. We follow the current cycle in the liturgical year of the Church and our key stage Acts of Worship reflects the gospel reading of the previous Sunday. In this way the children develop an awareness of the Church traditions and journey, with the wider church, through the life of Christ from birth to Resurrection, the promise of the Holy Spirit and the spread of the Good News. In this way too, the children gain

experience of the seasons in the liturgical calendar and so Advent and Lent are given their rightful significance.

The second strand of our themes of worship looks at a range of spiritual and moral issues which the children encounter, at differing levels. Through interactive acts of worship, issues such as sharing, fair and unfair, right and wrong, recognising choices, meeting needs, making a contribution etc are explored and discussed. Children are invited to contribute their ideas and opinions. We also invite outside speakers to address the children on a variety of issues.

Conducting an Act of Worship

Wherever possible, children, school staff, parents, governors and the clergy take part in leading an act of worship together.

If the act of worship is in assembly, children are expected to come into the school hall in silence, whilst appropriate music is played. The act of worship is seen as providing a period of calm and reflection within the school day, for the whole school (and its wider community when appropriate). A hymn, or age-appropriate song, is sung during assembly. These are varied so as to ensure all age groups can participate. Our worship structure includes lighting a candle to signify that God is with us and that this is a time for reflection and calmness. A liturgical greeting is used and a final blessing given. The altar at the front of the hall is covered in the appropriate liturgical colour. This is explained to the children. A prayer is said at the end and the children are invited either to join in by saying "Amen" at the end, or reflecting on the mood of the assembly by being "still on the inside and still on the outside". The children leave assembly in silence, again accompanied by music.

Prayer

We believe that prayer should encompass the following:

- P** Praise
- S** Sorry – for the things done wrong by us and others
- A** Asking for things – for others and ourselves
- L** Listening – to God
- M** Meditating on the mystery of God and the wonder of Creation

We believe that prayer should come from the heart, but we also know that it has to be taught by example. It is corporate or individual and at its heart it is communication between a believer and God.

A suite of school prayers are in place for class teachers to use with children at the beginning of the school day, before lunch and at the end of the school day.

To support the importance of individual prayer lives, the children have a prayer book that begins in Year 1 and is added to termly with the child's own prayers. This book

follows the children throughout their time at school and is presented to them when they leave St Mary's School.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Spiritual and Moral Development is a life-long process and in the life of the children, is shared between parents/ carers, the school and the wider community. We acknowledge the wide variety of beliefs that make up our community; however our policy reflects the Christian focus of our school. Therefore we seek to foster values and morals based on Christian teaching, which are also shared by the major world faiths. Key ideas and words that have been identified as being particularly appropriate when exploring spiritual and moral concepts and include the following:

- Life, birth, creation, death
- Sleep, refreshment, renewal
- Friendship, fidelity, love, passion, patience
- Imagination, inspiration, enlightenment
- Elation, delight, joy, gladness, laughter
- Sorrow, sadness, grief, reconciliation, forgiveness, self control
- Injustice, pain, suffering, anger, courage, shame, guilt
- Kindness, gratefulness
- Pity, compassion
- Wonder, awe, reverence, adoration
- Splendour, beauty, perfection
- Stillness, calm, peace, silence, tranquillity, harmony
- Light, darkness
- Eternity, mystery, infinity
- Hope, dream, fact, fantasy
- Insight, intuition, belief, faith, trust
- Truth, certainty, uncertainty, proof

Poems, stories, paintings, photographs, natural objects, and music are some of the ways that children can be encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective.

Resources

Resources for acts of worship are kept in the resources cupboard. The resources are specifically chosen to deliver the relevant themes from the acts of worship overview. Class teachers may access these at any time to plan and prepare to lead their act of worship.

Planning for Worship

The worship plan informs members of staff of the themes for each week and is agreed between the Head teacher, one of the parish clergy and RE/Worship leader.

Year 6 Leavers' service

Each year, a special service for Year 6 leavers takes place at school. Leavers are invited to "tell their story" and are also presented with their school prayer book. They are also reminded that the Church (as well as the school) will continue to be there for them in the years that lie ahead.