

A Fresh Approach to Collective Worship in the Classroom for worship co-ordinators

in Canterbury and Rochester Diocesan Schools

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.
Know that the LORD is God. It is He, who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.
Psalm 100: 1-4



Introduction



'But how can we sing a new song in this strange land?'
Psalm 137: 4

Psalm 137 speaks of a time when God's people were living in Babylon after being taken into exile. They were living in strange times, unable to continue with many of their 'normal' practices. Whilst there were many moments of sadness and looking back to former times, they knew that God was still God and that their worship could still happen, it would just need to adapt to the 'new normal'.

Like the Israelites, most of us find ourselves in strange times, unable to hold or lead acts of worship as we used to. However, if we reflect on what made our worship the 'heartbeat' of school life and the parts that brought us joy, our worship will retain its rhythm and pattern wherever we are.

This handbook has been designed to offer guidance and support to schools as they redesign their worship in classrooms, bubbles, pods and other small groups. It builds on the information contained within

<http://www.rdbe.org.uk/uploads/pdf/A%20Fresh%20Approach%20to%20Collective%20Worship.pdf>

Footnote:

'But how can we sing a new song in this strange land?' This might seem a strange title for this booklet when we are not allowed to sing. Singing brings joy and without it will worship feel the same? It is up to schools to create joyful life within worship in new ways – this is what schools do best and with God's heartbeat at the centre, life bringing worship will blossom, with or without singing.

What is worship?



For Christians, worship is about **coming into God's presence** and giving **glory**; an act of **praise** and **adoration** through which they develop their relationship with God and obedience to His word. It is through encountering God within worship that they are formed (and transformed) as God's people – this can take place anywhere and at any time and isn't just what happens inside a church service. It requires the right spirit and heart, which is a very personal thing.

'True worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth.' John 4:22

Christian worship can take many forms; singing, prayer, silence, acts of love and service, reflection, reading/studying the Bible, meeting or eating together.

'They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people' Acts 2: 42, 46

Collective Worship that is ... Inclusive, invitational and inspiring

Collective worship in Church of England schools must recognise the collectivity of all participants, so must not assume, that all have the same beliefs and values. All acts of worship must therefore be, inclusive, invitational and inspiring.

In a Church of England school, collective worship is:

- ⦿ **Invitational**, offering everyone the opportunity to engage in the act of worship, whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- ⦿ **Inspiring and creative, impacting** the whole community and motivating them into action.
- ⦿ **Inclusive**, where all are **included, have a voice** and are **listened to**.
- ⦿ A **valued** part of the culture of the school, **breathing life** into every aspect of the school day.

Spend some time pondering these questions before shaping your worship structure, including that within each classroom

- How is collective worship a reflection of our distinctive Christian vision?
- What is at the heart of our collective worship?
- What does worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring look like in each classroom?
- How can we retain all that is 'life giving' in collective worship in our new settings and format?
- How can we ensure worship has an impact on our whole school community when we cannot all join together for an act of worship?
- How will these thoughts on the style and nature of worship be shared with my staff team?

You might like to refer to: <http://www.rdbe.org.uk/> in particular

http://www.rdbe.org.uk/uploads/pdf/SIAMS%20Evaluation%20Schedule%202018_0.pdf

Strand 6 'Impact of Collective Worship' in the SIAMS evaluation schedule 2018

<http://www.rdbe.org.uk/uploads/pdf/policy%20guidance.pdf>

Collective worship policy guidance

<http://www.rdbe.org.uk/uploads/pdf/A%20Fresh%20Approach%20to%20Collective%20Worship.pdf>

A fresh approach to collective worship guidance document

<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/>

Interactive and creative prayer ideas

[William and Lucy lead worship resource](#) (produced by Canterbury Diocese)



Guidance on structuring Worship in the Classroom

For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” Matthew 18:20

Worship in the classroom is a great way to spend quality time with your class, in a different way to teaching them, without thinking about targets, success criteria, outcomes etc. It allows the children to enter worship in a more intimate way, where many children feel more comfortable to interact and join in. It is also a fantastic opportunity for the children to lead some or most of the worship as they often feel safer in front of a small audience. You know your class the best, so when planning worship in the classroom, ensure it is suitable and relevant for the age and needs of the children.

Collective worship, wherever you are, needs to follow the gather, engage, respond and send format.

Gather, Engage, Respond and Send worship structure

	Gather	Engage	Respond	Send
Key ideas	<p>We are invited to prepare our hearts and minds to meet with God.</p> <p>We gather together for this special time as a community</p>	<p>We engage with the big things and the little things in life</p> <p>We encounter Jesus and the stories of the Bible</p> <p>We listen to God’s message and how consider how it might apply to our lives.</p>	<p>We respond to what we have heard and seen through prayer, silence, stillness and reflection.</p> <p>We are given the invitation to worship God in different ways.</p>	<p>We are sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the world</p> <p>We are all sent out with God’s blessing</p>
Biblical context	<p>The next holy day almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. Acts 13:44</p>	<p>Jesus told them a story to teach them that they should keep on talking with God and not give up. Luke 18:1</p> <p>He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables. Mark 4:2</p> <p>Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work. 2 Tim. 3:16,17</p>	<p>But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. Luke 15:6</p> <p>In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. Matthew 6:14 (<i>The Message</i>)</p>	<p>So the word of God spread Acts 6:7</p> <p>I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John13:15</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Questions to consider when planning an act of Collective Worship</p>	<p>How do we prepare the classroom for worship? How could it be made to feel different to a lesson? <i>(Some examples: a mini altar table could be set up, desks could be moved to allow some space, use a room spray to add a 'fragrance' to the room)</i></p> <p>Is everyone who is involved in worship today ready and prepared? Do they all know what they are doing?</p> <p>How do we prepare for worship and to meet with God? <i>(Some examples: quiet music, video clip playing, central image or quote up)</i></p> <p>How might you expect your class to enter the worship space?</p> <p>How will we signal that worship is about to begin?</p> <p>How will we gather today to greet each other? <i>(What will we say – this is an opportunity to use some Anglican liturgy?)</i></p>	<p>How will you share and illustrate the Bible story, message and or theme with my class? <i>(Some examples: story, video clip, drama etc.)</i></p> <p>How will your class engage with the Bible text and know where in the Bible it comes from? <i>(Will it be read out, displayed, told in own words?)</i></p> <p>What questions will you ask the children to engage them into the story, teaching or message? <i>Some examples:</i> <i>'I wonder what you think this story might teach Christians or us as a school community?'</i> <i>'I wonder why Jesus told this story?'</i> <i>'I wonder if this story makes you think of a situation in your life?'</i> <i>I wonder why Christians might think this story is special?'</i></p> <p>How will you link it to real life ('take it back to the playground or at home') or events in the local community or world? Link to Christians around the world, charity events.</p>	<p>How will you allow your class to respond? <i>(Think, question or act)</i> <i>Some examples</i> <i>'I wonder what you might do differently after hearing the story today?'</i> <i>'I wonder how you felt after watching that video clip?'</i> <i>I wonder what you can do to ... help/care for others, forgive, persevere or be a better friend etc.?</i></p> <p>How will you incorporate reflection, silence or stillness into worship?</p> <p>What opportunities will there be for formal or informal prayer? <i>(for example, teacher-led, child-led, spontaneous, planned, up on screen, personal in head, call and response, prayers used as part of Anglican liturgy)</i></p>	<p>What thought will you send your class out with as they leave or finish the act of worship? <i>(for example, a soundbite, activity or key message from the act of worship to reflect on as they leave worship and over the rest of the week.)</i></p> <p>What special words, final blessing or prayer will be used as the worship finishes? <i>(this is an opportunity to use some Anglican liturgy)</i></p> <p>How will you signal that worship has ended? <i>(for example, blow out the candle, play some calm music, change the lighting?)</i></p>
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Key features of each section of worship	Check list/prompts Altar table out, Bible and candle, props for the act of worship. Calm atmosphere created? Music on, focal image up. Share a bidding prayer or greeting Light the candle	Check list/prompts (Sing together) – Listen to a piece of music together. Read from the Bible. Share the message. Use a variety of strategies. (Video, artwork, music, drama, props etc.) Discuss and question the children.	Check list/prompts Opportunity to respond – discuss, question, think. Prayer time Reflection time, opportunity for silence or stillness. Listen to a piece of music to reflect on.	Check list/prompts Blow candle out. Send your class out with a thought or action. Share a sending prayer / blessing as the children leave.

Questions to support planning an act of collective worship in the classroom:

- Is there a clear, simple message that flows through the act of worship?
- How will I illustrate the message and enable my class to access it? (Make sure this illustration doesn't distract from the Biblical teaching and message.)
- Is the act of worship built around the Bible text/story for that session?
- How will I communicate this Bible text / story to my class?
- How could I use 'I wonder' questions to make the children dig deeper, explore, ponder and reflect on the meaning within the Bible text/ story?
- How will I invite the pupils to respond to the message and Bible text/story?
- How will I use the pupils within the act of worship? What parts could they plan and lead?
- How will I incorporate a time of reflection, stillness or silence. What part of today's message will I ask the pupils to think about in this time?
- What might the impact of the worship on your class be?



Practical points to consider:

1. Think about transitions

- How will you 'move' from a lesson into worship? How will the children know it is time for worship?
- How will you begin worship?
- How will you end worship?
- How will you create a calm, welcoming atmosphere ready for worship?

Ideas for opening and closing worship in the classroom

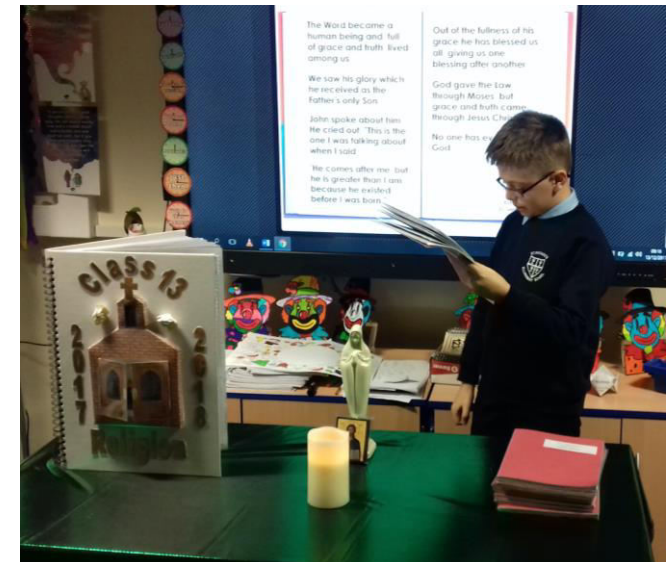
- 🕯️ Ensure the lesson resources have been cleared away.
- 🕯️ Begin worship with a familiar worship song – to signal that we are moving away from learning into a time of worship.
- 🕯️ Light the candle and begin with a familiar greeting.
- 🕯️ Set out a small altar or focal point, that your class has made or put together.
- 🕯️ Create your own class routines – could you choose or create your own greeting and sending prayer that is specific to your class?
- 🕯️ End worship with extinguishing the candle and saying the sending prayer together.

2. Think about the layout of your space

- Where will the children sit?
- Where will I be?
- Can /should this be different to a class based lesson?
- Where else could you hold your act of worship?
The Church, school field / playground?

3. Think about the worship table/ focal point

- How will it be distinctively Christian?
- What will go on it?
- Who will prepare the space?
- Where will it be kept between worship sessions?



4. Think about using your reflection / prayer space

- How could you use it within the worship time?
- How could you add to it?
- What could you leave in the space as a reminder of the thought or story?



Pupil led worship:

Worship in the classroom is the perfect 'training ground' for fledging worship leaders.

The SIAMS evaluation schedule says worship should '*enable pupils as well as adults to engage in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship that lead to improving practice.*'

Pupils should be responsible for the planning of worship as well as taking the lead for parts of it. You might want to ask groups of children to plan worship for the following week, working on a rota to allow all those who are keen to have a turn.

Other children could be involved in setting up the worship 'Altar' table, lighting the candle, reading the Bible or operating the music.

See Page 16 of <http://www.rdbe.org.uk/uploads/pdf/A%20Fresh%20Approach%20to%20Collective%20Worship.pdf> for further guidance on this.



William and Lucy lead Collective Worship is a practical resource book, which explains the pattern of worship in a Church of England school. The accompanying training pack was written support schools in growing and developing pupil leaders of worship. For more information about the resource book and training pack and where to purchase it click [here](#).

I wonder how you are developing pupil leaders in worship?

I wonder how you will incorporate your pupils in the planning and leading of worship?



Class liturgy:

Christian worship has always followed patterns. These patterns have been known as liturgy. You may already be using phrases like 'The Lord be with you, and also with you, or 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord'

The pattern of collective worship, wherever you are, is really important as it helps to give structure and create a routine.

As a class, I wonder if you could create your own opening and sending greetings that become part of our class worship ritual? Think carefully about the sorts of words you want to include and those you do not. It might be worth exploring examples of child friendly liturgy to guide your creations.

For example:

God be with us in our classroom,

God be with us now.

God be with us every day,

God be with each of us now. Amen

Guide and protect us as we go out from worship to make a difference in your world. Amen

See pages 19-20 <http://www.rdbe.org.uk/uploads/pdf/A%20Fresh%20Approach%20to%20Collective%20Worship.pdf> for further guidance on singing in worship and song choices.

Activities:

Research has show that there a variety of spiritual styles and that it important to try and address these in worship over time (not all at once!)

- Provide a balance of activities and styles over time to allow all children and adults to engage with the worship, for example,
 - Artwork
 - Music
 - Images/icons
 - Multimedia
 - Drama
 - Story
 - Reflection time
 - Stillness
 - Silence
 - Prayer

Worship without singing:

Music and singing has always played a huge part in the life of God's people and their worship. This Psalm reminds us that worship is much more than just singing. It is about bringing your praise, thanks and gratitude to God in whatever form you choose.

Praise him for the mighty things he has done.

Praise his supreme greatness.

Praise him with trumpets.

Praise him with harps and lyres.

Praise him with drums and dancing.

Praise him with harps and flutes.

Praise him with cymbals.

Praise him with loud cymbals.

Praise the Lord, all living creatures!

Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150: 2- 6

So, how can we enjoy music, when we are not currently allowed to sing? Here are some ideas:

Speak to one another with the words of psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts.

Ephesians 5:19

- 🕯 Ask several children to speak a verse of song, one at a time.
- 🕯 Choose an appropriate section of a Psalm to speak out loud.*
- 🕯 Listen to a piece of worship music and encourage the children to play instruments or clap their hands.
- 🕯 Learn some sign language to accompany a worship song.

For example: Always with me - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ADas6j17Uw>

Wonderful Lord, wonderful God - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=je66ti1DQRk>

God is with us forever - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LovLvqwtxkY>

🕯️ Listen to a piece of reflective music as you pause to be still, reflect and pray.

For example: Hillsong reflective worship songs - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q04XE2-XhyA>

It is well by Philippa Hanna - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70Bs7SFKI_E

Still I will praise by Lucy Grimble - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PWu-iRaen6s>

How Great Thou Art sung by Lauren Daigle - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BL06fxHPVo>

God with us by Terrian - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJbtWOSYjBM>

**See pages 30-31 <http://www.rdbe.org.uk/uploads/pdf/A%20Fresh%20Approach%20to%20Collective%20Worship.pdf> for further guidance on Psalm worship.*

See pages 21-23 <http://www.rdbe.org.uk/uploads/pdf/A%20Fresh%20Approach%20to%20Collective%20Worship.pdf> for further guidance on singing in worship and song choices.

Strand 6 – The impact of collective worship

Inclusive Invitational Inspiring

In a Church school, collective worship should be inclusive, invitational and inspiring.

How is collective worship an expression of the school's Christian vision?

In developing collective worship that is inclusive, invitational and inspiring the school community needs to evaluate the extent to which 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, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- 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.

(SIAMS evaluation schedule 2018)

Collective worship leader

- **How can you ensure these areas are all met in your school?**
- **How will you evaluate collective worship to ensure it has an impact on the whole school community? **see monitoring guidance sheets***

Distinctive Christian Vision



Creating Worship that is
Invitational, Inclusive and Inspiring

Connect with
myself

Connect with
vision and values

Connect with the
community

Collective Worship

Connect with God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Connect with the
Bible

Connect with faith

art music

reflection stillness silence

worship story liturgy prayer



Is it the Heartbeat of the school?

'time to breathe'

How can you be creative with this
valuable time?