

British Values and Christian Values



*“It shouldn’t take any intervention from my department to say that young people should be learning the fundamental British values of **democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, tolerance and respect** - because these British values are fundamentally a good thing. Fundamental British values are the attributes that have in this century and the last, made our country one of the greatest forces for good. They’re the values that bind us together, that mean despite the many differences in our nation, we’re united as one people. ...So I’m unapologetic in saying that no school should be exempt from promoting fundamental British values, just as no school should be exempt from promoting rigorous academic standards.” (Rt Hon Nicky Morgan: Why Knowledge Matters, 27 January 2015)*

“... the Bible has helped to give Britain a set of values and morals which make Britain what it is today..” (David Cameron)

The requirement for schools to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain with a focus on British values is still a new challenge for schools, although every school would be certain to state that they always had been preparing their pupils for life beyond school. Church schools, in particular, have always been able to articulate the Christian values that underpin the life of their school, and the overlap between these and British Values is clear, especially as one could argue that the values of our country have emerged from its long history as a Christian nation.

The key Christian principles that can be said to underpin both Christian Values and British values are:

- That every person is made in the image of God: every person is valued as a unique individual and their voice counts
- That God is a God of order (viz. Creation)
- That the Bible demonstrates the need for law (“render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s)
- Christian Values and British values can be summed up in the New Commandment. “My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you” John 15 V 12

	
<p>Democracy The Rule of Law Individual Liberty</p>	<p>Justice Trust Responsibility</p>
<p>Mutual Respect and Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs</p>	<p>Peace, Agape, Koinonia, Humility, Forgiveness, Hope, Respect, Friendship, Compassion, Wisdom</p>

The Bible and British Values

The following Bible passages and stories could be linked to the British value headings. These could be used in the classroom or collective worship, or as general discussion starters.

Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “See I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction now choose life that you and your children may live.” Deuteronomy chp 30 vs 15-19 ○ Calling the disciples Matt chp 4 vss 18-21 ○ The quarrel about who should sit at Jesus right and left hand in heaven Matthew chp 20 vss 20-23
Rule of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.” Romans chp 13 vs 1 ○ Jesus teaches about the law Matt chp 5 vss 17-20 ○ Paying taxes to Caesar Luke chp 20 vss 21-25 ○ Be “in” the world not “of” the world - see Isaiah chps 2,3,11 ○ The wisdom of Solomon 1 Kings chp 3 vss 16-28 ○ Zacchaeus Luke chp 19 vss 1-10 ○ Moses and the Ten Commandments Exodus chp 20 vss 1-20 ○ Jesus new commandment John chp 13 vs 34
Individual liberty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Christ has set us free –Galatians chp 5 vs 1 ○ The truth sets us free - John chp 8 vs 32 ○ Adam and Eve – free to do wrong - Genesis chps 2 , 3 ○ Ten Lepers freed from the constraints of their illness Luke chp 17 vss 11-19 ○ Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane debating duty - Matthew chp 26 vss 36-46 ○ The rich young man imprisoned by his own riches - Matthew chp 19 vss 16-22 ○ The two builders and choosing your lifestyle - Matthew chp 7 vss 24-27 ○ Zacchaeus - Luke chp 19 vss 1-10
Mutual respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be devoted to one another, love one another above yourselves - Romans chp 12 vs 10 ○ We are made in the image of God - Genesis chp 1 vs 27 ○ Good Samaritan freely helps his enemy - Luke chp 10 vss 29-37 ○ Creation is good - Genesis chp 1 ○ The soldier’ s unexpected faith in a “subject” teacher - Luke chp 7 vss 1-10 ○ Mary and Martha, the importance of listening to others - Luke chp 10 vss 38-41 ○ Jesus washed the disciples feet like the lowliest servant - John chp 13 vss 1-20 ○ Story of Ruth, respect for relatives and for the poor - Ruth 1-4
Tolerance of different cultures and religions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do not judge others and you will not be judged - Matthew chp 7 vss 1 ○ Naaman learns respect for other nations - 2 kings chp 5 ○ Good Samaritan - Luke chp 10 vss 29-37 ○ Jesus and the children his disciples tried to push away - Matthew chp

	<p>19 vss 13-15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The woman at the well, despised by her village yet Jesus gets into a theological debate with her - John chp 4 vss 1-26
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Values (whether Christian or British) are all actually about windows mirrors and doors.....

- How we look out at the world and learn about life in all its fullness – our window
- How we look at ourselves and at the same time reflect on the insights and perspectives of others – our mirror
- And the action we take because of our beliefs and values, and how this reflects on the community in which we live –our door.

The Bible verses and stories above are the window and the mirror, but action is also needed (“Faith without works is dead” – James chp 2 vs 14). In action (the door) these British values in a Church school can look like:

Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having a school council ○ Debating competitions ○ Highlighting the development of democratic ideas in history lessons ○ Allowing pupils to vote for Head Boy/ Head Girl/ House or Sports captains ○ Ensuring all pupils are listened to by adults ○ Inviting MPs and other speakers to the school ○ Holding mock elections at election time ○ Encouraging the Christian value of “Service” – including service to the community as a whole
Rule of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classes creating “class rules” ○ Having a clear behaviour policy that is understood by all ○ Organising visits from the police service (“people who help us”) ○ Highlighting the rules of God in the RE curriculum, for example the 10 commandments and the two great commandments (love of God and of neighbour) ○ As appropriate, link moral values to aspects of civic and political life
Individual liberty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage students to be independent and creative in their learning ○ Provide students with opportunities for personal reflection ○ P4C ○ Discussing moral issues in PSHE, History and RE ○ Give encouragement and support to express personal aspirations and goals ○ Children helped to realise they are significant, unique and precious individuals

Mutual respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having a mission statement that is inclusive ○ Constantly promoting respect for others in all personal interactions ○ Reinforcing the value of everyone’s opinions in class debates ○ Having an effective anti-bullying policy ○ Emphasising in RE and PSCHÉ lessons that every person is unique (“created in the image of God”) ○ Having active educational links with other schools, including those with pupils of different cultural backgrounds ○ Supporting charities – but not in such a way as to encourage superiority to the recipients ○ Participating in a range of social activities and educational visits within the community ○ Valuing different ways of communicating – <i>really</i> listening ○ Valuing the home and cultural backgrounds of learners ○ Understanding the concepts of privacy and “personal space” ○ Being a place of hospitality
Tolerance of different cultures and religions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Highlight how Religious Education provides pupils with a deep understanding and awareness of the faith and traditions of religious communities as a basis for understanding and respecting them – show this on your website ○ Show how Jesus encouraged “tolerance” and respect in his life and teachings (e.g. Parable of the Good Samaritan) ○ Meeting a wide variety of people from different contexts and sharing experiences with them

Some Final Questions

- ◆ How explicit are your school (Christian) values in the life of the school? Are you certain that visitors to your classrooms and collective worship leaders uphold your school values in their words and interactions?
- ◆ Are opportunities taken in all subjects and every aspect of school life for pupils to embrace the school values? Does teaching allow pupils to develop the skills that equip them to challenge when the school values are not upheld?

But remember Christianity can also be counter-cultural e.g:

- ◆ expressing disquiet with the materialism and moral culture of Britain
- ◆ being a worldwide faith with an international perspective
- ◆ challenging actions in the name of love and justice (but not with violence) to make the community better

So perhaps in our schools we can also encourage a dialogue in our staffrooms and in relating to pupils, parents and others, just as in the New Testament the Early Church modeled some of those ideas that are important for democracy - shared living, discussion, debate and dialogue.