

INDEX

Pg 2 Introduction

Pg 3 Christian collective worship

Pg 4 Planning acts of collective worship

Pg 6 Making the Worship Space Special

Pg 9 **G**athering

Pg 11 **E**ngaging

Pg 14 **R**esponding

Pg 18 **S**ending

Pg 20 FAQs

Pg 21 Collective worship and SEAL type themes – a Bible Reference Chart

A Few Collective Worship Pointers

- Every pupil in your school is entitled to a daily act of collective worship.
- Every school has the legal responsibility to provide a daily act of collective worship for every child – although this can be offered at any time of the day and in any normal size of grouping, from individual class to whole school.
- Only parents / guardians can withdraw children from collective worship on religious grounds – if a teacher takes a child out for e.g. school council meeting, or a class goes swimming then you are breaking the law! (Although in the latter scenario the class could have a class based act of worship separately from the rest of the school.)
- Collective worship in a Church School should always be Christian, and include elements taken from the worship of its founding Church, whether Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist etc.
- Community schools' collective worship should be “mainly” and “broadly” Christian. The “mainly” means that at the very least 51% of the acts of collective worship should be Christian (the rest could draw on other faith traditions). The “broadly” means that the collective worship should not include materials which are linked to a particular denomination e.g. you can use the Bible which is accepted by all Christians, but you should not promote Evensong, or saying the rosary. *Church schools sometimes mistakenly use this “mainly, broadly” description of their own worship – but this is to misquote the law.*
- Importantly (and rather obviously) the law requires that collective worship should be appropriate to the ages, aptitude and backgrounds of the pupils participating. It wouldn't be much good if it wasn't!

During their school careers most children should participate in the equivalent of approximately fifty hours of worship per year.- six hundred hours overall. However, pupils and teachers do not attend school with the intention of worshipping God, they are there for educational purposes. In most schools, even church schools, it is probable that the majority of those present in collective worship will not be Christians; some of these may be members of other faith communities, others will be of no faith at all. Thus for many present the only experience they will have of Christian worship, perhaps in their entire lives, is in school assemblies. In this scenario a worship leader needs to attract and sustain the assembly's interest, by delivering a message which is memorable, yet at the same time readily comprehensible by people of limited religious vocabulary. Quite a tall challenge – and one that is actually more stretching, one could argue, than preparing a sermon for a Sunday service!

What's going on in collective worship?

A quick checklist of the kind of things you would expect to see happening in collective worship is shown below – all these themes will reappear later in this document.

Celebrating	Giving honour to God
Christian teaching and beliefs	Using silence
Faith and practices	Reinforcing values
Knowing worth	Singing praises
Special atmosphere	Promoting community
A special set apart time	Praying
Sharing experiences	Experiencing

How Christian should our collective worship be?

The answer to this question varies according to whether you are a Church School or a Community School (there are no differences between Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Church Schools).

Any school can include the following Christian elements in its worship, as these are accepted amongst Churches worldwide:

- ➔ Using the Bible, either as a source book, or as an inspiration for themes and stories
- ➔ Observing the cycle of the Church's Year – Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Saints Days
- ➔ Learning and saying traditional prayers from a number of sources, in particular the Lord's Prayer and the Grace
- ➔ Singing a wide variety of hymns, from traditional to rap
- ➔ Using Christian symbols in worship and reflecting on their meaning e.g. cross, crucifix, bread and wine
- ➔ The use of prayer, silence and reflection
- ➔ Using Psalms with simple responses

These are more obviously Anglican elements of worship which could be used in Church of England Schools.:

- ➔ Using prayers from the service book "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*
- ➔ Using Collects as a focus for worship
- ➔ Eucharists

→ Encouraging links with the worship of the local parish church

It is not expected that every element of every act of collective worship will be about explicit Christian beliefs: many acts of collective worship will revolve around themes of Christian values which could be illustrated by secular imagery and examples.

Constructing acts of collective worship

a) Planning

The majority of schools now plan their collective worship around extended themes that may last anything from a week to half a term. These themes may be developed over consecutive days, or, in schools where there are several worship leaders, the theme may be extended over a run of e.g. Thursdays. It is important to keep a record of what is planned and delivered in the assemblies, especially if there are several collective worship leaders – yes, the story of the Good Samaritan may be an excellent Biblical illustration of your collective worship theme, but it begins to lose its impact if it is unwittingly used three times in a fortnight! A clear planning system allows every worship leader to see how their input contributes to the theme as a whole – as well as making it easier for children to see the joined up thinking behind the message.

Off the shelf assembly books are a useful support to collective worship programmes, but no truly effective collective worship plan will depend on taking a book off a shelf on your way into the assembly hall! If you are a regular collective worship leader, however, it is wise to have a couple of such books put aside for emergencies!

When planning the collective worship programme for a year, a good start is always to begin by blocking out the weeks during which the collective worship will be linked to Christian festivals before you start considering additional themes. Every Christian festival will support a rich variety of worship themes and you will find suggestions for these elsewhere on this website.

Planning could also focus on what is sometimes thought of as the four key dimensions of spirituality:

- The Inner Dimension – the essence of a person and the search for inner meaning
- The Social and Moral Dimension – behaviour and relationships
- The Environmental Dimension – awareness of the natural world and the environment around us
- The Transcendental Dimension – response to God or whatever we see as the ultimate.

b) Include time for thinking – sharing – listening – reflecting- prayer

These elements are the basic ingredients of any good act of worship. Remember that “less is more” – in the limited time available in an assembly a it is usually most appropriate to plan to deliver one key, simple message, reinforced with stories, practical illustrations, music and prayer, rather than develop a complex theme or attempt to deliver several messages at once. If children are being presented with new ideas, or being introduced to religious beliefs and language, they need time to absorb and consider this new information and relate it to themselves.

Remember the assembly will be made up of a mixture of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. Engage visual learners with pictures, objects, story sacks, signs, and guided meditation. Engage auditory learners with telling stories, a variety of music, and generally varying the pattern of the worship. Kinaesthetic learners will appreciate action stories and songs, playing games, using movement in prayers.

Worship is often described under four main headings – Gathering – Engaging – Responding – Sending – the next section of the booklet is laid out according to these key themes. But first.....

Setting the scene – Making the Worship Space Special

Are some places more spiritual than others? Some people talk about “thin places” where God’s presence seems to “leak through” more easily – in fact in a BBC poll nearby Walsingham in Norfolk was once voted the nation’s most spiritual place. Many places built for worship also promote a feeling of peace and oneness with God. Often this may be related to the way people have loved and cherished a place for years, and one can almost feel a chain of prayer passing down the ages. It may also be because the architects have put something of God’s nature in the structure of the building – think, for example, how on entering Ely Cathedral your eyes are automatically drawn up in wonder.

If you enter a church, or any other place of worship, your eye is usually drawn *forward* to a *focus*. In a church this may be an altar or a preaching desk, in a mosque it will be a mihrab, in a gurdwara it will be the Guru Granth Sahib under its canopy. These holy things convey immediately what is special to the people who worship in this place. What conveys the message to your pupils that collective worship is different from a lesson held in the same hall space?

Questions to ask your school

What makes our worship space or location special in a spiritual sense?

What impact might different seating arrangements have on worship?

What impact do different worship settings have e.g. church, classroom, outdoors?

How does our worship space appeal to the senses?

Of course, people do not need a purpose built cathedral to worship God, Christians can worship anywhere. Places in the natural world often inspire experiences of God. Why not take school worship outside too (weather permitting!), especially if the theme of the collective worship is related to Creation and the environment.

A rather different lesson we learn from churches is that they are not always well planned as modern worship spaces! Members of congregations may find themselves having to make a choice between seeing or hearing the service, but not being able to do both readily. Some buildings have excellent acoustics for singing (having been built at a time when services were normally sung) but are poor for the spoken word. So look carefully at the space you use for worship, try sitting where the children sit (and at the same level), listen to the distracting sounds, and think about colour, light and darkness – are they enhancing or inhibiting the worship experience?

Have you ever experimented with a different seating layout to make everyone feel included in collective worship? Do those at the back or the sides of the hall feel “out of it”? Watch a variety of worship leaders engage with the assembly – are there some children who never get chosen for anything, simply because of where they are sitting? Some schools have experimented with sitting children in “families” consisting of a child from each year group – the Y6 children enter the hall first and sit spaced out around the hall, to be joined by their family members as classes arrive. This way of organising things can have several social advantages :- different children take

turns to sit at the back or front - older children support the younger, which helps concentration and can improve behaviour - children in the same class group who should not sit together (!) can be separated with the minimum of fuss.

	<p>Colour, objects, images all capture children's attention. In your parish church you will probably see the seasonal colours of the church year in use (purple for Advent and Lent, white / gold for Christmas and Easter, red for Pentecost and saints' days, green for Trinity). These could be used in a hall as part of your worship focus and also as a visual (teaching) link to the worship of the Church. Think about worship tablecloths (possibly including appropriate symbols), colour coded displays, and church year clocks.</p>
<p>Does your assembly hall have a cross on the wall or perhaps a portable cross on a worship table? Where is it situated in relation to the children's eye line? Is it a real focus or just wallpaper? Other Christian symbols could be used also – a fish or a rainbow may be appropriate – or if your school is named after a saint, their symbol could be used.</p> <p>Crosses do not have to be elaborate. Clay crosses could be made from tiles created by the children, or an adult could make one from a child's design. For a woodturner and retired teacher who will create a cross to your own design see www.jonathonhemingray.co.uk</p>	
	<p>Banners are widely used in worship – they can be designed to relate to a particular festival or Bible verse, or can be made for general use. They also have the advantage that they are portable! Banners could be created by the whole school, with every child doing at least one stitch – demonstrating in real terms how everyone is included in part of the worshipping community.</p> <p>A banner effect can also be achieved by creating a design on the back of the piano.</p> <p><i>The banner in the illustration is very personal to its school – the figures are created using school sweatshirts from the lost property box!</i></p>

Create a focus wall to support the theme of collective worship and which is immediately behind the worship leader.

Good focus walls are constantly changing and can be “grown” to support a theme as it develops e.g. start with a virtually blank wall, and each worship leader add an item to the display as they make their contribution. This helps pupils to recollect the nuances of a theme and see it developing. You could leave a space for children to add their comments and questions too!

Is the wall you face covered in wallbars instead of display boards? Think about some portable display boards especially for use in collective worship.



If you regularly have class based collective worship then you need to think about how to make this worship space special too. What about a prayer corner with a poster and some reflective questions?

The idea of using chairs to create interactive displays for odd corners of the school came from Gloucester Diocese – you can find out where to get these support materials at <http://gloucester.anglican.org/schools/jumping-fish-publications/f>

Worship in all religions makes use of the senses – does your collective worship do the same?

Occasionally you may like to think about “doing something different” to prepare the worship space, perhaps using incense, or in the dark days of Advent blacking out the assembly hall and using candles.



Most schools already use pupils to prepare the hall for worship, but instead of just instructing them what to do, have you thought of asking them what would help them worship? An interactive display to be visited later? An explanation of why you use the worship candle? More thought about the positioning of the screen, or the seating arrangements?

Long term, you may want to look at pupils helping design and create materials to enhance the worship space – banners, posters, tablecloths, displays....

Gathering

Creating an atmosphere which is conducive to worship is very important – atmosphere can be affected by many things. When you gather for collective worship what happens? In many schools classes enter the hall to music which has been especially chosen perhaps to support the music curriculum or from teachers' favourites. Have you ever thought about how the music selected for the gathering process of the school actually affects the worship which follows – a jolly Souza March, for example, might be much enjoyed by the children – but they will be jiggling around to the rhythm, not preparing to focus and be reflective. Why not choose instead music which fits with the atmosphere you are trying to create – perhaps even playing over hymns that are going to be used later in the worship. You are trying to encourage a feeling of *calm expectation*.

Questions to ask your school

How do we select the music for entry and exit to the hall? Will our choice encourage a reflective atmosphere – or destroy it?

Have we looked at the possibility of introducing a liturgical structure to worship? What benefits might this have?

What signals the beginning of worship and marks our time together as special?

How do you greet each other as the worship commences? This can be a simple “good morning”, as if you were meeting in the corridor, or it could be a religious (liturgical) greeting acknowledging that you are coming together as a community to worship God. Such a greeting could be said, signed or sung. It could be a verse from the Bible or one of the commonly used responses (The Lord be with you – *And also with you*). It need not be the adult leader who greets the school – when a set liturgical greeting is known and used it can be delivered by one of the pupils.

Candles and lights are frequently used in worship. Schools vary their use of a collective worship candle – in some schools this is used only for the prayers. Using a candle to mark the whole of the worship period, however, does help you to delineate clearly between worship *per se* and the assembly time notices – this is especially useful when (a) you have children withdrawn from collective worship, as these should rejoin the school for the notices or (b) you have an extended assembly which is essentially “show and tell” or awards focussed, with only a small element of worship.

The school choir or your Year 6 Class could be the first into the assembly hall and sing a reflective, repetitive piece as the other classes enter. Gradually the whole school joins in until all are singing. Taize chants are particularly good for this kind of approach, and include materials in a wide variety of languages. Books and CDs are readily available, and go to http://www.taize.fr/en_article681.html for a taster of the music.



If you are interested in experimenting with liturgical greetings, or structuring your

Flippin' Praise can be ordered through http://www.cofesuffolk.org/assets/downloads/children_youngpeople/Resources/order%20form%2

worship to the gathering /
engaging/ responding / sending
pattern, then the book you need
is "Flippin' Praise".

[Oflippin%20praise%20apr15.pdf](#)



How do your pupils know which greeting (and sending)
ritual you are using? Create a focus display to show
them.

Using a candle to mark the time
of worship helps to send the
message that this time is special
and different from the rest of the
day. People often respond
intuitively to a dancing candle
flame, and it may be that during
the time of reflection you could
encourage those who do not
wish to pray to simply watch the
flame as they think their own
thoughts.



Engaging

“Engaging” relates to the main substance of the act of collective worship where we engage with the message of the day. In essence we are listening to God’s message to us. This may take many different forms – storytelling, drama or music, images, songs or meeting visitors. In a Church of England School, in particular, this should be an opportunity for children to engage with the Bible and Christian teaching – although this does not preclude the use of secular illustrations when talking about e.g. Christian values.

It goes without saying that you need to be able to capture the pupils’ imagination and build bridges between the theme of the worship and their own experiences, and this often means that the “engaging” section will begin with a related introductory activity which “speaks” to those present. However, beware! One mistake that many worship leaders can make is to get carried away with the introductory activity and cram the worship element into a few minutes at the end. In addition, it is most commonly when the speaker makes the transition from popular culture to religious message that pupils’ attention is lost. This is not necessarily through any aversion to religion, but because the worship leader has inadvertently signalled through change of tone, body language or the use of complex terminology that something “boring” or incomprehensible is coming.

In collective worship, leaders need to be certain that any religious language or concepts they use are readily accessible to children, by explaining them at an appropriate level and with practical illustrations

Often pupils are involved in worship through answering questions or impromptu drama. In class assemblies, or variations on show and tell, pupils also get an opportunity to share their work (although this may be actually rather difficult to link to worship other than under the heading “thanks for gifts and talents”). Many schools now are coaching pupil volunteers (a pair of children, or a group of up to eight) to be worship leaders in their own right i.e. to both prepare and deliver the message of the worship. Obviously this is something which needs supervising and rehearsing, as well as steering and oversight in the planning stage. It is not something to be done without proper preparation – but it can work well, especially if “sold” as an occasional privilege which pupils should consider and sign up for.

Class led assemblies sharing work can also be more worshipful – why not choose your worship theme with great care, and put the children’s work together into a powerpoint of photographic images with voice(s) over? This will give everyone a better opportunity to appreciate the work done, and more thought can be given to the worship commentary than the manoeuvring of children often allows!

Questions to ask your school

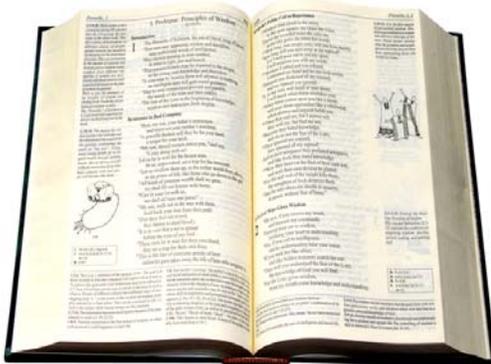
What do our voices and body language convey during collective worship? Do they say that we are at ease with worship, or does our demeanour change as we move from secular activity to faith content?

How Christian are our acts of collective worship?

Who is involved in planning the collective worship themes? Could our links with the local churches actually support our planning person / team?

Are children, in any real sense, worship leaders? How can we support this?

How are the creative gifts and talents of our staff used to support collective worship?



How can you use the Bible to best effect in collective worship? In most contexts it is probably more helpful to *tell* or enact Bible stories than *read* them direct from the Bible itself as this has several advantages:

- it allows you to adapt the language to match the understanding of the children, and to add explanations as necessary;
- it encourages the use of a variety of interesting story-telling techniques.

The assembly should always be made aware that the Bible is being used, and have the opportunity to hear key verses (but not long passages) direct from the text.

Use drama, powerpoint images etc to bring the messages of the Bible home.

Why not make sure there is always a Bible on your worship table whenever you are referring to Bible stories or Biblical teachings? And make the links between your storytelling and the book itself e.g tell them where in the Bible the story can be found if they want to look it up.

Help!

There are a lot of people available who can help a school work out the content of its collective worship programme. If you are in a Church School, then the Foundation Governors, in particular, are supposed to be monitoring and supporting your collective worship – invite them to join a planning meeting once a term or once a year to share their ideas. They may also be a source of resources and have suggestions for worship leaders from the community. If they are not confident enough to lead worship themselves they could support it in other ways, such as helping make worship banners. And, remember, it doesn't always have to be the vicar who takes on this task – any knowledgeable lay person should be able to help!

There are many different types of worship experiences, and any good collective worship programme will include a variety of approaches and draw on a variety of Christian traditions. Why not experiment with a series of assemblies in which the main focus is artwork or a piece of music? Use open ended wondering questions to think about what is puzzling about the story and what questions it raises for our own lives. You can also use short film clips or excerpts from TV programmes to bring out a theme (they do not have to be overtly religious as long as they can be tied to your Christian message). . Fine art images can be found through Google!





Remember that the Christian Church is not limited to this country! Think about how you can bring a multicultural dimension to your worship by using stories, prayer and songs from the worldwide Church.

You could begin by using Google Images to find Christian art from many different countries.....

Responding

Following the engagement, we respond to what we have heard and seen. We respond both as a school community, but also as individuals – this is where people, *if they wish to do so*, may actually be said to be worshipping God.

The response may take many forms - it could be singing, prayer or reflection. It could also be a practical response, such as planning to create something, or to embark upon fundraising for others.

Singing

Music and singing engages both hearts and minds in a way that spoken words often do not - the Church of England teaches much of its theology through hymns. You will often find on occasions, such as weddings, participants will remember and ask for the hymns that they knew at school – so if the only time that many people will meet with Christian songs and hymns is in their primary school experience of collective worship, it actually becomes very important which hymns you choose to use in your school. Songs which are catchy and quick to learn need to be balanced by those which may take more preparation, but actually remain meaningful in the longer term.

Often acts of collective worship begin with a hymn or worship song, but if you look at how church services are planned you will realise that hymns are selected to complement the theme and lead the worshipper through the worship experience. As a school does not normally have time for five hymns (!) per act of worship, it is good to spend time thinking about what the purpose of the hymn is, and where it most appropriately sits. In general, you can categorise music under a number of headings e.g: (a) seasonal – such as Christmas carols (b) by shape or form – rounds, hymns with verses, songs with a cantor and response and (c) by what it does – prepare people, act as a prayer, offer praise or comfort. So, if you have chosen a hymn which fits particularly well into your theme, then it may be that it would be best sung later in the worship where it acts as a response piece.

Singing, in particular, gives schools an opportunity to bring a multicultural dimension to their worship, whilst at the same time recognising the worldwide dimension of the Church. Learning a hymn from a different culture could also be an inspiration for finding out something about the Church in that country as a focus for a particular act of worship.

Questions to ask your school

What hymns are we using most frequently? Do we try to relate them to the message of the worship?

Would it be appropriate to place the hymn where it fits best into the worship – rather than always beginning with singing?

Are there a variety of worship experiences over the year– e.g. styles of music or changes of pace?

Does the school draw on a variety of Christian traditions? What limits us from doing this effectively?

How do we know that we are praying for the things *the pupils* see as important?

What ways are there of being reflective other than sitting in silence?

Are there opportunities for worship discussions to be followed up in the classroom?

Prayer

Prayer is one obvious area where children can lead in worship. This can be everything from:

- Contributing suggestions for prayer topics (prayer tree etc)
- Offering extempore (impromptu) prayer in the context of worship
- Using prayers with responses
- Reading set prayers
- Writing and reading their own prayers
- Leading the Lord's Prayer or School Prayer
- Singing prayers

The place of prayer in collective worship is constantly debated in schools as it is a very real issue whether children who do not have a personal faith of their own should be made to pray. Of course, in reality nobody can be *made* to pray, for prayer is not something we *do*, but the focus of our relationship with God and the way in which we co-operate with the mysterious work He is doing in us. However, the argument runs, young children are in a vulnerable position in collective worship because they may be anxious to please their teachers, or so used to following instructions, that they are somehow forced or tricked into uttering prayers which they do not mean. This remains a live issue, and schools normally deal with it by making it clear that prayer is invitational, not compulsory. In real terms this can mean using the traditional formula "Let us pray" (after having spent time early in the academic year talking with the children about what prayer is), or, alternatively using a more convoluted introduction to each prayer (e.g. "I am now going to say a prayer that Christians use, if you agree with it and want to make it your own then you can say "Amen" at the end").

Sometimes schools wonder whether they can use times of reflection *instead* of prayer in their collective worship. In good practice it is not actually a case of either / or, but of both / and. It is usually personally helpful to have a quiet moment of reflection as part of an act of worship, especially in the responding time towards the end of the session as it allows participants to think over something of what they have heard and internalise it. However, it is important that this reflection time has a structure and purpose of its own, otherwise minds will wander! Begin the reflection by telling the children what it is they should be reflecting on – don't be afraid to be specific (e.g. "think what you would do if you had been.....", rather than simply saying "think about what we've heard". You can also support the time of reflection by showing a beautiful photograph or playing a piece of reflective music.

Think in terms of "the gift of stillness" rather than "being silent"!

The Lord's Prayer is the common prayer of all Christians and you can find it in many different forms and hundreds of different languages. You do not always have to say the prayer – why not sing it or learn to sign it?

It is important to have a series of acts of worship explaining the meaning of the prayer at regular intervals over the years, so that everyone knows what they are saying!

As the universal prayer, it may be that there are children in your school who know it in another language – why not encourage them to say it in their first language as you say it in English – and even teach it to the rest of the school or include it in your wall displays? The website Christus Rex has the Lord's Prayer in just about every language you can think of – and a few hundred that you've never heard of – see <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/pater/index.html>

Intercessions are prayers for others –how is the worship leader going to gather together the school's prayer requests to be used in collective worship?

Asking for topics for prayer during the worship and bringing these together in extempore prayer

Having a display such as a prayer tree or a prayer message board where requests for prayer can be left, anonymously if necessary

Inviting classes in turn to suggest the topics for prayer

Creating an intercession display board where newspaper cuttings or photographs can be pinned as a reminder of the themes of the intercessions

On special occasions you can use visuals – a powerpoint or projector slide- and bidding prayers thus inviting people to have their eyes open when they pray, and focus on the meaning of the image for them.



Remember that if your school wants to record music, photocopy from authorised publications or download song lyrics and music for your times of collective worship you will need a copyright licence – see <http://schools.uk.ccli.com/>

Experiment with different signs or postures for prayer – it doesn't always have to be "hands together, eyes closed"! You could use hands in a variety of ways according to the type of prayer that you are praying - hands together for an asking prayer – hands open on the lap for a thank you prayer, thumbs pointing to yourself for a personal prayer etc.. Or you could use the different fingers of the hand to count off different types of prayer.



Reflecting on the message of an act of worship doesn't necessarily mean sitting in silence – it could mean talking to your neighbour for a few moments about what you have heard. (Be sure that you can "get them back" afterwards!)

<p>What are the different ways children can be involved in music making in your school? Are there instrumentalists who can make up a worship band on occasions? Is there a choir which could perhaps sing during the time of reflection? Are there some (adults and) children with strong voices who could cantor for a responsive song e.g. the Peruvian Gloria.</p>	
	<p>What is your church singing? There should be simple settings of parts of the liturgy and some hymns which could be incorporated into your school's worship, (Talk with the music leaders at your church – they may offer you materials, and even come along to help you learn them.) But this should be a two way process – are child-appropriate songs being used in your church's worship too?</p>
<p>Use a different focus on occasions for prayers – for example dropping a pebble into a clear bowl of water each time you pray for someone, or using large sized beads as prayer beads. Children can be encouraged to watch the prayers, rather than sitting with eyes closed.</p>	

Sending

The end of an act of collective worship should be marked in as positive a way as the beginning – we have not simply “finished”, we are being sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the world. We are all dismissed with God’s blessing. The moment should be full of purpose.

Here the sending ritual can be similar to the gathering ritual used earlier:

- Exit could be to a joyous hymn – “You shall go out with Joy” is an obvious example. http://www.billysloan.co.uk/songs/you_shall_go_out_with_joy.html As they leave, the children take the song with them back to their classrooms.
- There could be a liturgical prompt and response (Go in peace; go in joy; go in love. *Amen*)
- Sing or say a blessing
- Say the Grace together (*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen*)
- Passing the Peace
- Extinguishing the worship candle

Questions to ask your school

Do we need a “sending ritual” to conclude our worship?

What do we want children to “take away” from collective worship? What will they remember about their experience of collective worship? How does worship relate to the life of the school?

When did we last ask the pupils for their opinions on collective worship? What did we do about their responses? Is it time to ask again?

Passing the Peace

The worship leader says: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

The assembly answers: And also with you.

Everyone exchanges greetings with those around them. a simple handshake and the words, "peace be with you" is traditional.

**PEACE BE WITH
YOU!**

Evaluate it afterwards

Every week a school spends as much time in collective worship as a church member may spend in church on a Sunday. We need to know it is the best experience we can offer the children and adults of our community. In church schools the foundation governors have particular responsibility for monitoring the quality of collective worship (are they doing it?).

What about setting up a system where you get occasional but regular feedback from the pupils themselves? This could be:

- One of the duties of the School Council
- A pupil worship committee
- The subject of a regular questionnaire
- A comment book which older pupils in turn are invited to fill out, for example, once a fortnight

Questions you could ask your Pupils

1. Do you like the seating arrangements for worship? Is it comfortable? How can we make the worship space look better or use it better?
2. What do you think of the worship table / display? Is there anything we could add? Should we change it more often?
3. How should we behave during worship? Does everyone come in sensibly? Do visitors behave well? Should we have more or fewer visitors?
4. Do you prefer some types in worship more than others? Which music is best for us getting worship to start? Should we use more or less music in worship?
5. Do you like to be involved in leading worship? Do you like to see other children leading worship? Do you enjoy singing / talks / acting things out / praying / reading / coming out to the front / showing work/ receiving awards....? Are children involved enough in worship?
6. Do you prefer your teacher to be at worship? Do you like to see teachers joining in worship? Do you like to see other adults join us for worship?
7. What do you remember best about worship? Does worship make you feel better or happier? Does worship help you think about God / Jesus / the world / other people / yourself? What do you think about in worship? What have you learnt from worship?
8. Which of the different things we do in worship do you like best? Are there any things that you don't like?
9. Is there anything in worship which you find hard to understand? What do you find easy to understand? (Do you learn some of the same ideas at home? Do you worship outside school?)
10. Do you enjoy singing in worship? Do we practise hymns and songs too much / not enough? Are there any songs you know which you would like us to sing in worship?
11. Do you like time in worship to reflect on what has been said and done? Do we have long enough / too long for reflection? What do you think about mainly in reflection? Do you sometimes find it hard to reflect? Would anything (e.g. quiet music) help you to reflect?
12. Do you like saying prayers? Do you like writing your own prayers? Do we pray about the things you think are important in worship?

FAQs

Is hymn practice a valid act of collective worship?

Are you offering an act of collective worship or a music lesson? If the act of worship is focussed on learning a Christian hymn and you spend time talking about the message of the words and coming to an understanding of the teaching of the hymn in a framework of reflection and prayer – then that is collective worship. If you are teaching a song which happens to be Christian without any of the other planned worship elements, then it is an all school music lesson. Think in terms not of “hymn practice” but of “new song or praise assembly” – use the gathering / engaging / responding / sending framework found earlier in this booklet and use the new song as the theme (“engaging”) section of the worship.

Can we use materials from other faith communities in church school collective worship?

There may be times of the year when you wish to allude to what is happening in other faith communities, especially if there are members of that faith in your school. However, the general principle behind collective worship in a church school is that *all* acts of worship should be Christian, and some will contain Anglican elements. If you wanted, for example, to share pupils’ work on Divali, you could do that within the context of an assembly (i.e. you had assembled the school for that purpose), but it would not be your collective worship. If you wish to talk about what is happening in another faith community the best way to do this is to have a slightly truncated act of worship, blow out your worship candle, then move into your presentation.

What happens if children are withdrawn from collective worship?

If parents withdraw children from collective worship on religious grounds then the school still needs to exercise the duty of care but does not need to provide alternative activities for the child. The child needs to be supervised by an adult at all times, but this could include sitting in the school office. If the whole school is going to the church for a service, including those who would normally supervise the child, it is reasonable to ask the parents to take the child home or to personally supervise them on school premises.

What happens if children miss collective worship?

The law is clear – all children are statutorily entitled to a daily act of collective worship, and it is not within the power of staff to deprive them of this entitlement for e.g. swimming, remedial reading or music lessons. If a whole class is missing, then a class-based act of worship can be held for them at a different time of the day. Individuals or small groups of children should not be timetabled out of collective worship, and the school may accordingly need to look at e.g. the use of peripatetic music teachers.

Bible Stories and SEAL

Many schools are now using SEAL, with great success, but questions have been asked about whether the SEAL assemblies are appropriate for church schools, given that they are secular assemblies –not Christian acts of collective worship. Twelve Baskets have booklets of Christian acts of collective worship to fill this gap, all firmly based on Bible stories, although, admittedly, some themes are harder to cover than others – what do you do for “safety at the seaside”?! .

In order to help you create your own acts of worship which work with SEAL, you will find below a table of such themes with a smattering of possible Bible story connections. You will find some Bible stories appear several times under different headings, which helps to demonstrate the breadth of each story. This is not intended to be a definitive list and the headings are fairly arbitrary (!). As the list is confined solely to stories, we would recommend the use of a good Biblical concordance if you are looking for all the teaching on a particular theme. We have put the Bible references rather than the name of the story to save space; of course during collective worship you may wish to use the Bible, a Bible storybook, or re-tell the story yourself; in most cases we would recommend a retelling of the story, rather than reading from the Bible for young children, because of the difficulty of inappropriate language levels.

(Note: a verse number followed by f indicates that verse and the one immediately following.)

THEME	BIBLE REFERENCES
Actions count	Genesis chapter 24, Jonah, Matthew chapter 18 verses 23-34, Matthew chapter 25 verses 31-36, Luke Mark chapter 6 verses 14-30, Mark chapter 10 verses 30-37, Mark chapter 12 verses 31-44, John chapter 13 verses 1-20,
Authority & Leadership	Genesis chapters 37 –45, I Samuel chapter 8 with chapter 10 verses 17-24, I Samuel chapter 16 verses 1-13, II Kings chapter 18 verses 13-37 & chapter 19 verses 1-36, Nehemiah chapter 1 verses 1-4, chapter 2 , chapter 4, chapter 6 verses 1-16, Daniel chapter 3 & chapter 6, Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11, Matthew chapter 8 verses 5-13, Matthew chapters 21-28, Mark chapter 4 verses 35-41, , Mark chapter 9 verses 2-9, Mark chapter 5 verses 1-20, , , Mark chapter 6 verses 45-52, Mark chapter 11 verses 1-19, Luke chapter 2 verses 39-52, Luke chapter 6 verses 1-5, Luke chapter 19 verses 28-40, Luke chapter 19 verses 45-48, , Luke chapter 20 verses 19-26, Luke chapter 23 verses 1-49, Acts chapter 27 verse 1 – chapter 28 verse 1,
Barriers	Genesis chapter 2 verse 4 – chapter 3 verse 24, Genesis chapter 11 verses 1-9, Joshua chapter 6 verses 1-23, Matthew chapter 19 verses 13-27, Mark chapter 2 verse 23 – chapter 3 verse 6, Luke chapter 10 verses 25 –37, Luke chapter 18 verses 35-43, Luke chapter 19 verses 45-48, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18, Acts chapter 19 verse 21 – chapter 20 verse 1,
Beginnings (and new beginnings)	Genesis chapters 1 & 2 , Genesis chapter 2 verse 4 – chapter 3 verse 24, Genesis chapter 6 verse 5 – chapter 9 verse 29, Genesis chapter 11 verse 31 – chapter 13 verse

Beginnings (and new beginnings) (contd)	18, , Genesis chapter 24, Genesis chapter 32 verse 3- chapter 33 verse 12, II Kings chapter 5, II Kings chapter 22 verses 1-20 & chapter 23 verses 1-25, Nehemiah chapter 1 verses 1-4, chapter 2 , chapter 4, chapter 6 verses 1-16, Matthew chapter 3 verses 11-17, Matthew chapter 4 verse 18-22, Matthew chapter 19 verses 13-27, Matthew chapters 21-28, Mark chapter 5 verses 1-20, Luke chapter 18 verses 35-43, , John chapter 21 verses 1-14, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18,
Belonging	Luke chapter 2 verses 39-52, Matthew chapter 3 verses 11-17, Matthew chapter 7 verses 24-27, Matthew chapter 13 verses 3-8, Luke chapter 15 verses 4 –32,
Call	Genesis chapter 11 verse 31 – chapter 13 verse 18, Exodus chapter 2 verse 11 – chapter 3 verse 12, I Samuel chapter 3 verses 1-19, I Samuel chapter 16 verses 16-23, Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4-19, Jonah, Matthew chapter 4 verse 18-22, , Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, John chapter 21 verses 1-14, Acts chapter 9 verses 1-18, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18,
Caring	Genesis chapter 2 verse 22 – chapter 2 verse 15, Exodus chapter 1 verse 8 – chapter 2 verse 10, II Kings chapter 5, Amos, Matthew chapter 9 verses 1-8, Mark chapter 2 verses 1-14, Mark chapter 12 verses 31-44, Luke chapter 10 verses 25 –37, Luke chapter 15 verses 4 –32, , John chapter 12 verses 1-8
Changes	Genesis chapter 11 verses 1-9, Genesis chapters 37 –45, Matthew chapter 19 verses 13-27, Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, Mark chapter 5 verses 1-20, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18,
Commitment	Genesis chapter 11 verse 31 – chapter 13 verse 18, I Samuel chapter 17, II Kings chapter 5, II Kings chapter 22 verses 1-20 & chapter 23 verses 1-25, Jeremiah chapter 38 verses 1-13, Luke chapter 2 verses 39-52, Luke chapter 4 verses 1-13, Luke chapter 21 verses 1-4, Matthew chapter 7 verses 24-27, Matthew chapter 13 verses 3-8, Luke chapter 12 verses 13 –21, Mark chapter 14 verses 66-72, Matthew chapters 21-28, Acts chapter 6 verse 1 – chapter 8 verse 1, Acts chapter 19 verse 21 – chapter 20 verse 1,
Community and co-operation	Exodus chapter 19 verse s 1-20, chapter 20, chapter 24 verses 3-8, Joshua chapter 6 verses 1-23, Judges chapter 6 – 7, II Kings chapter 22 verses 1-20 & chapter 23 verses 1-25, Esther,
Courage and conscience	Genesis chapter 2 verse 22 – chapter 2 verse 15, Exodus chapter 2 verse 11 – chapter 3 verse 12, Exodus chapter 5 verses 1-12 with verse 42, Joshua chapter 2, Judges chapter 7, I Samuel chapter 17, I Kings chapter 19 verses 1-21, II Kings chapter 18 verses 13-37 & chapter 19 verses 1-36, Jeremiah chapters 36 & 38, Nehemiah chapter 1 verses 1-4, chapter 2 , chapter 4, chapter 6 verses 1-16, Esther, Daniel chapter 3 & chapter 6, Luke chapter 10 verses 25 –37, Luke chapter 18 verses 35-43, Luke chapter 19 verses 45-48, Mark chapter 14 verses 66-72, Matthew chapters 21-28, Acts chapter 5 verses 12-42, Acts

	chapter 6 verse 1 – chapter 8 verse 1, Acts chapter 15 verse 1- chapter 16 verse 40 Acts chapter 20 verse 22 – chapter 25 verse 12, Acts chapter 27 verse 1 – chapter 28 verse 1, Philemon,
Deceit and dishonesty	Genesis chapter 27 verses 1-45, Judges chapter 16 verses 4-30, I Kings chapter 21, II Kings chapter 5, Amos, Matthew chapter 2 verses 1-12, Mark chapter 14 verse 12-26, Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, Luke chapter 19 verses 45-48,
Deceit and dishonesty (contd)	
Doubts and uncertainties (fear)	Exodus chapter 2 verse 11 – chapter 3 verse 12, I Kings chapter 19 verses 1-21, Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4-19, Jonah, Esther, Matthew chapters 21-28, Mark chapter 4 verses 35-41, Mark chapter 6 verses 45-52, Mark chapter 14 verses 27-52 & 66-72,
Dreams and visions	Genesis chapter 32 verse 3 – chapter 33 verse 12, Genesis chapters 37 –45, I Samuel chapter 3 verses 1-19, I Kings chapter 19 verses 1-21, Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4-19, Ezekiel chapter 37 verses 1-14, Matthew chapter 2 verses 1-12. Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11, Mark chapter 9 verses 2-9, Acts chapter 9 verses 1-18, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18,
Fairness and justice	Genesis chapter 6 verse 5 – chapter 9 verse 29, I Kings chapter 12 verses 1-16, Esther, Matthew chapter 20 verses 1-16, Luke chapter 19 verses 45-48, Luke chapter 23 verses 1-49
Faith and faithfulness	Genesis chapter 6 verse 5 – chapter 9 verse 29, Genesis chapter 21 verses 1-3 & chapter 22 verses 1-19, Judges chapter 7, Ruth, II Kings chapter 18 verses 13-37 & chapter 19 verses 1-36, Jeremiah chapters 36 & 38, Daniel chapter 3 & chapter 6, Luke chapter 21 verses 1-4, Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11 Matthew chapter 7 verses 24-27, Matthew chapter 13 verses 3-8, Mark chapter 4 verses 35-41, Mark chapter 14 verses 66-72, Matthew chapters 21-28, Mark chapter 14 verses 15-72, Acts chapter 15 verse 1- chapter 16 verse 40, Acts chapter 27 verse 1 – chapter 28 verse 1,
Family, friendship and relationships	Genesis chapter 2 verse 4 – chapter 3 verse 24, , Genesis chapter 2 verse 22 – chapter 3 verse 15, Genesis chapter 11 verses 1-9, Genesis chapter 25 verses 27-34 with chapter 27 verses 1-45, Genesis chapters 37 –45, Exodus chapter 1 verse 8 – chapter 2 verse 10, Ruth, Luke chapter 2 verses 39-52, Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, Matthew chapter 9 verses 1-8, Mark chapter 2 verses 1-14, Mark chapter 14 verses 66-72, Luke chapter 10 verses 30-37, Luke chapter 15 verses 11-32, John chapter 12 verses 1-8, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18,
Favouritism	Genesis chapter 27 verses 1-45, Genesis chapters 37 –45,
Forgiveness	Jonah, Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, Luke chapter 15 verses 4 –32, Matthew chapter 9 verses 1-8, Matthew chapter 18 verses 23-34, Matthew chapters 21-28, Luke chapter 18 verses 10-14,
Foundations for life	II Kings chapter 22 verses 1-20 & chapter 23 verses 1-25, Matthew chapter 25 verses 31-36, Luke chapter 6 verses 47-49,

Freedom	Exodus chapter 5 verses 1-12, Exodus chapter 5 – chapter 6 verse 13 & chapter 7 verse 14- chapter 12 verse 51, Luke chapter 6 verses 1-5, Mark chapter 5 verses 1-20, Luke chapter 18 verses 35-43,
Good and evil	Genesis chapter 2 verse 4 – chapter 3 verse 24, I Samuel chapter 17, Amos, Esther, Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11, Matthew chapters 21-28, Mark chapter 5 verses 1-20, John chapter 13 verses 1-20
Good and evil (contd)	
Intolerance	Ruth, I Kings chapter 12 verses 1-16, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18, Acts chapter 19 verse 21 – chapter 20 verse 1,
Jealousy	Genesis chapter 27 verses 1-45, Luke chapter 15 verses 11-32,
Journeys	Genesis chapter 11 verse 31 – chapter 13 verse 18, Exodus chapter 5 – chapter 6 verse 13 & chapter 7 verse 14- chapter 12 verse 51, Ruth, Jonah, Luke chapter 2 verses 39-52, Luke chapter 10 verses 25 –37, Mark chapter 4 verses 35-41, Luke chapter 19 verses 28-40, Acts chapter 9 verses 1-18, Acts chapter 20 verse 22 – chapter 25 verse 12 Acts chapter 27 verse 1 – chapter 28 verse 1,
Light and dark	Genesis chapter 2 verse 4 – chapter 3 verse 24, Matthew chapters 21-28, Acts chapter 15 verse 1- chapter 16 verse 40,
Loneliness	Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4-19, Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11, Matthew chapters 21-28, Mark chapter 14 verses 66-72, , Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, Luke chapter 10 verses 25 –37, Luke chapter 18 verses 35-43, Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10,
Lost and found	Genesis chapters 37 –45, Luke chapter 2 verses 39-52, Luke chapter 15 verses 4 –32, Philemon,
Loyalty	I Samuel chapters 24 & 26, I Kings chapter 12 verses 1-16, I Kings chapter 18 verse 7 – chapter 19 verse 3, II Kings chapter 18 verses 13-37 & chapter 19 verses 1-36, Jeremiah chapter 38 verses 1-13, Mark chapter 2 verses 1-14, Mark chapter 14 verses 66-72, Matthew chapters 21-28,
Peer Group Pressure	Judges chapter 16 verses 4-30, Daniel chapter 3, Daniel chapter 6, Matthew chapter 13 verses 3-8, Mark chapter 14 verses 15-72, John chapter 12 verses 1-8
Perseverance	Genesis chapter 11 verse 31 – chapter 13 verse 18, I Kings chapter 19 verses 4-18, II Kings chapter 5, Nehemiah chapter 1 verses 1-4, chapter 2 , chapter 4, chapter 6 verses 1-16, Esther, Daniel chapter 3 & chapter 6, Luke chapter 15 verses 4 –32, Luke chapter 18 verses 35-43, Matthew chapter 8 verses 5-13, Luke chapter 8 verses 43-46, Matthew chapters 21-28, Mark chapter 2 verses 1-14, , Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18, Acts chapter 20 verse 22 – chapter 25 verse 12
Prayer	I Samuel chapter 3 verses 1-19, I Kings chapter 18 verse 7 – chapter 19 verse 3, I Kings chapter 19 verses 4-18, Luke chapter 18 verses 10-24,
Precious things & gifts	Matthew chapter 13 verses 45f, Matthew chapter 19 verses

	13-27, Matthew chapter 20 verses 1-16, Mark chapter 12 verses 31-44, Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, Luke chapter 21 verses 1-4, Luke chapter 12 verses 13 –21, Luke chapter 15 verses 4 –32, John chapter 12 verses 1-8,
Promises (including covenant)	Genesis chapter 6 verse 5 – chapter 9 verse 29, Exodus chapter 2 verse 11 – chapter 3 verse 12, Exodus chapter 19 verses 1-20, chapter 20, chapter 24 verses 3-8, ,I Samuel chapter 16 verses 16-23, II Kings chapter 22 verses 1-20 & chapter 23 verses 1-25, Ezekiel chapter 37 verses 1-14, Mark chapter 14 verses 66-72, , Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10,
Promises (including covenant) (contd)	
Renewal or Repentance	II Kings chapter 22 verses 1-20 & chapter 23 verses 1-25, Ezekiel chapter 37 verses 1-14, Luke chapter 15 verses 11-32, Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10, Luke chapter 15 verses 4 –32, Philemon,
Rules & laws	Exodus chapter 19 verses 1-20, chapter 20, chapter 24 verses 3-8, I Kings chapter 12 verses 1-16, II Kings chapter 22 verses 1-20 & chapter 23 verses 1-25, Mark chapter 2 verse 23 – chapter 3 verse 6, Luke chapter 6 verses 1-5
Signs, symbols and symbolic actions	Genesis chapter 6 verse 5 – chapter 9 verse 29, Exodus chapter 2 verse 11 – chapter 3 verse 12, Joshua chapter 6 verses 1-23, I Samuel chapter 16 verses 1-13, I Kings chapter 19 verses 4-18, Jeremiah chapter 1 verses 4-19, Jeremiah chapters 36 & 38, Matthew chapter 3 verses 11-17, Matthew chapters 21-28, Mark chapter 4 verses 35-41, Mark chapter 11 verses 15-19, Luke chapter 19 verses 28-40, Luke chapter 19 verses 45-48, , Luke chapter 20 verses 19-26, John chapter 13 verses 1-20, Acts chapter 10 – chapter 11 verse 18,
Speaking up	I Kings chapter 18 verse 7 – chapter 19 verse 3, Jeremiah chapter 19 verses 1-20, Jeremiah chapters 36 & 38, Daniel chapter 3, Daniel chapter 6, Matthew chapter 5 verses 14f, Mark chapter 14 verses 15-72, Luke chapter 2 verses 39-52, Luke chapter 20 verses 19-26, Acts chapter 5 verses 12-42, Acts chapter 6 verse 1 – chapter 8 verse 1, Acts chapter 15 verse 1- chapter 16 verse 40, Acts chapter 20 verse 22 – chapter 25 verse 12
Temptation	Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11, Mark chapter 14 verses 66-72, Luke chapter 4 verses 1-13,
Trust	Genesis chapter 11 verse 31 – chapter 13 verse 18, Genesis chapter 21 verses 1-3 & chapter 22 verses 1-19, Joshua chapter 2, Judges chapter 7, I Samuel chapter 17, II Kings chapter 18 verses 13-37 & chapter 19 verses 1-36, Jeremiah chapter 38 verses 1-13, Daniel chapter 3, Matthew chapter 4 verse 18-22, Matthew chapter 8 verses 5-13, Matthew chapter 9 verses 1-8, Mark chapter 4 verses 35-41, Mark chapter 5 verses 1-20, Luke chapter 12 verses 13 –21, , Luke chapter 18 verses 35-43, , , Acts chapter 27 verse 1 – chapter 28 verse 1, Philemon,