



# Saint James Primary School

# Collective Worship

# Policy

*'Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs'*  
*Psalms 100*



## Christian Values

The specific Christian Values of Love, Respect and Courage underpin, and are intrinsic to the ethos and belief of Saint James Church of England Primary School.

## Our Vision

At Saint James we accept challenges, take risks and work to make to make positive change in ourselves and our community. Focusing on building resilience and compassionate relationships allows everyone to flourish. Using our Christian values to guide us, we develop skills to navigate rough seas and transform our world. *'Be strong and courageous and do it'* - 1 Chronicles 28:20

## Introduction

This policy is an agreed statement of the values and aims of collective worship at **Saint James Primary School**. It has been prepared by the governors and headteacher with assistance from other staff and diocesan advisers. Collective worship is valued as a central aspect of the life of our church school, through which children grow spiritually, emotionally, morally and culturally.

## Legal status of collective worship and rationale

As a Church of England school, due regard is paid to statutory requirements, that schools will provide opportunities for daily collective worship that is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' (School Standards and Framework Act 1998)<sup>1</sup>

It will also reflect the traditions of the Church of England, i.e. the Anglican tradition. However, there is also a balance of content that enables children to develop an understanding and respect for other faiths.

Recognizing its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

## The right of withdrawal

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory. However, parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from any or all acts of worship. Those who wish to exercise this right must inform the Head Teacher in writing; they will also be required to advise the school on what alternative spiritual activity they wish their child to engage in during this time, whilst they are cared for by a member of the school's staff; parents may provide suitable activities for children so withdrawn. Please be aware that this does not mean that the children will be exempt from the Christian ethos of the setting which underpins our teaching, learning and relationships.

## Worship in our school should:

### As worship:

- Be at a level to enable children and adults to explore their own understanding of God within a Christian framework.
- Explain and promote the core Christian values of the setting.
- Have Integrity as acts of Anglican worship whilst being *invitational, inclusive and inspirational*.
- Be based on Biblical text or themes.
- Be central in importance to the life of our school community, which is part of a wider community that embraces the whole world.
- Mark the seasons and festivals of the Christian year
- Develop understanding of Anglican traditions such as the lighting of a candle or use of a cross

### For people:

- Develop personal spirituality within the setting community through a range of experiences including individual and collective prayer.
- Celebrate the God given gifts and talents of individuals.
- Make a significant contribution to the overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of members of the school community.

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## Aims of our worship

- To promote the joy of worship as engaging, inspiring, inclusive and transformative.
- To develop spirituality, morality, social and cultural values.
- To give an opportunity to experience the meaning and significance of faith as revealed in the Bible.
- To understand, celebrate and develop children's knowledge of Christian beliefs, celebrations, traditions and religious festivals in the Anglican Church's year.
- Facilitate a deeper understanding of the Christian story narrative, from creation to the present day.
- To appreciate that people, cultures and beliefs differ and to demonstrate respect, tolerance and generosity towards them.
- To develop young children's sense of self-worth and to provide opportunities to celebrate achievements.
- To develop a caring attitude to others and a sense of community and loyalty
- To provide opportunities for children to plan, lead, contribute to, monitor and evaluate collective worship.
- To invite clergy of the parish, other lay members of the parish and other Christian leaders in the community [as are acceptable to the parish church] to lead worship weekly.



## How we achieve our aims

We aim to promote collective acts of worship, which are rich, meaningful experiences that are appropriate and significant to the pupil's needs, age, development and interest by:

- Providing opportunities and creating an experience of the presence of God, by looking beyond the physical, material and measurable to explore feelings such as awe, wonder, love, respect and courage.
- Arranging worship at a distinctive, identifiable time in the school day. It will take place in a variety of groupings in the school hall, classrooms or within the school's outdoor environment as appropriate.
- Planning and linking themes which focus on a particular idea/concept, i.e., the liturgical year; festivals and celebrations, our Christian values.
- Using a wide range of resources, artefacts (from religious and secular sources), music, art, drama and external visitors to engage children's interest.
- Encouraging children to participate and experience different styles of worship, e.g., prayer, praise, silence, rituals, and become familiar with the language of worship, Biblical readings and liturgy.
- Providing opportunities for children and adults to reflect, contemplate their own thoughts, feelings and beliefs.
- Using the centrality of prayer – personal silent prayer, personal shared prayers, collective prayers, writing prayers; all prayer will be invitational.
- Involving young children and members of the wider community to participate in collective worship and activities within the parish. For key Church Festivals, such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, Key Stages, Class Grouping and individual classes will visit St James' Church for worship.
- Presenting and creating displays that promote and enhance spiritual ideas, thoughts and questions.
- Through providing a peaceful environment enabling stillness, reflection and prayer as well as times for a joyous environment with singing, music, dance, drama, etc.

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## Central attributes of an act of worship

The setting will endeavour to fulfil the following 'central attributes' of worship:

Gathering	Making worship a special time of the day.
Engaging	Using the best available techniques to stimulate interest in the content.
Responding	Ensuring there is time and opportunity for individual, group reflection and thought, so those attending can respond in a variety of ways.
Sending	Summarising the worship in a meaningful short message used to create an opportunity for those attending to implement the ideas covered and to conclude the worship.



Collective worship should be planned systematically, so that there is continuity, variety and clear focus on Christian stories, values and traditions. Worship is led by a variety of people that include school staff, the school chaplain, children, local vicar and representatives from the parish church and members of other Christian denominations. Occasionally outside speakers will be invited, but the structure of Collective Worship will remain the same.

## The centrality of prayer

During the collective worship there will be a time for response and reflection, to ponder on a question, statement or thought. This may also be reflected in an invitational prayer, offered spontaneously by a child or adult, read out or recited. This prayer can be displayed and used in class and setting reflective areas so that:

- Children understand the nature and purpose of prayer.
- Children understand the part prayer may play in their lives and the life of the setting community.
- Prayer contributes to the spiritual development of individuals and the whole setting community.
- There will also be appropriate opportunities for prayer and other worship activities, including reflection, outside of collective worship.



The school has two prayer trees on which children can write and attach their own prayers which will then be gathered and shared in a Collective Worship. From time-to-time dedicated prayer spaces will be created to engage children in prayer in a more varied and engaging way.

## Planning and Organisation

### Planning

Collective worship is planned systematically so that there is continuity, variety and clear focus on Christian beliefs and festivals.

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## Organisation

<b>Monday</b>	The theme will be introduced in a whole school Collective Worship.
<b>Tuesday</b>	Focus will be on a bible story that represents the theme of the week
<b>Wednesday</b>	Working with the churches available adults, children will learn, rehearse and sing both traditional and modern worship songs. There will then be a reflection on a suitable psalm that represents the theme of the week.
<b>Thursday</b>	The school chaplain or vicar will lead Collective Worship to the Lower and Upper School Groups respectively.
<b>Friday</b>	The Collective Worship will focus on recapping what the children remember about the theme and individual worships

## What Collective Worship Looks Like In Practice

The pattern of collective worship is as follows:

- Collective worship begins with each class bringing in their class candle to place on the altar, and allowing any children who have brought 'pebbles' to indicate their wish to say 'sorry, please or thank you', to place them in a bowl
- Everyone will be greeted and welcomed with 'Good morning St James' and 'Peace be with you' to which the response is 'And also with you'
- The altar candle/candles will be lit and the Candle Lighting prayer said by all
- The collective worship theme will be presented and everyone will be encouraged to engage with the theme/question/issue to enable them to connect with their own and others views/thoughts/opinions.
- After the theme has been presented, the children will be invited to spend a time in reflection on what has been presented during the collective worship. Children will be encouraged to spend a few moments in silence either with their eyes closed or focusing on the visual aid.
- Prayers will be led by either the leader or children, concluding with the Lord's Prayer
- It is important that the impact of what has been discussed is taken away by the children by ensuring that they leave the moment with a sense of thought/ action regarding the theme.
- The end of collective worship is signalled by extinguishing the candle whilst stating our school values of love, respect and courage and everyone will be dismissed with the words, 'Go in peace... Amen'
- The children then move into another space/lesson in a respectful way and the class candles are collected

## Resources

Resources will be provided as necessary for Collective Worship by the School Chaplain. Electronic Resources, including each Collective Worship outline and PowerPoints can be found on the school network.

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## Communication

The school will communicate with parents our collective worship themes via newsletters and display boards.

## Parental involvement

Parents will be kept informed about the themes of worship at the school through (for example, weekly newsletters, the collective worship section of the school website)

## Responsibilities

The normal expectation within our church school is for all staff to view collective worship as an important part of their own well-being and spiritual development as human beings. The school will endeavour to timetable staff so all have an opportunity to attend regularly.

At interview all applicants are informed that the school holds acts of collective worship that promote the Christian ethos and values of the school. The normal expectation will be that staff will participate in and lead collective worship.

The leadership team are responsible for co-ordinating the programme of induction and training for staff. Reverend Linda Galvin is responsible for planning and organising collective worship.

## Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of collective acts of worship is undertaken by governors and key staff. This process supports the school's self-evaluation and staff development and appraisal. All leaders of collective worship are asked to evaluate continuously, reflect after every worship, to develop and improve their practice.

## Review

This policy should be reviewed every two years.

Approved by Governing Body .....March 2025.....

Date of next review.....March 2027.....

## Appendices

APPENDIX 1a - Collective worship observation form and 1b Observation pointers

APPENDIX 2 - Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year

<sup>1</sup>Other statutory documents concerning Collective Worship include: section 25 of the Education Act 1944, the Education Reform Act 1988 and Section 346 of the Education Act 1996

References to 'parish' refer to the local parish church to which the school is linked.

### **This policy should be read in conjunction with:**

- The School Vision
- The aims and ethos of the school
- The school policy on Equal Opportunities
- The school policy for Teaching and Learning

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## APPENDIX 1a Collective worship observation form

Leader: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

Worship Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Allocation: \_\_\_\_\_ minutes

*Collective worship in Church of England Settings should at its simplest create a time and space where we can come closer to God and God can come closer to us.*

CRITERIA	ASPECT	COMMENT
<b>Central Attribute 1</b>  <b>Gathering</b>	Is there a real sense of a very special time in the day?  Immediate impact, relevant, welcoming, stimulates interest or dull, uninteresting, lacks focus.	
<b>Central attribute 2</b>  <b>Engaging</b>	Does the worship leader capture the attention of the children and staff so they become actively engaged in the content?  Excellent - well expressed, stimulating or poor communicator  Convincing, enthusiastic, warm or lack of rapport.	
<b>Central attribute 3</b>  <b>Responding</b>	Does the leader allow for a response from the children and adults – whether active or passive, noisy or quiet?	
<b>Central attribute 4</b>  <b>Sending</b>	Does the leader send us out with a clear “thought for the day” something that changes our behaviour in some way?  Clear summary, learners given opportunity to reflect or unclear what the message was.	
<b>In addition</b>		
<b>Content</b>	Clear Christian / Biblical content and teaching.  Woolly, lack of structure, largely secular.	
<b>Summary</b>		

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## APPENDIX 1b Observation form pointers for consideration - NB not a check list.

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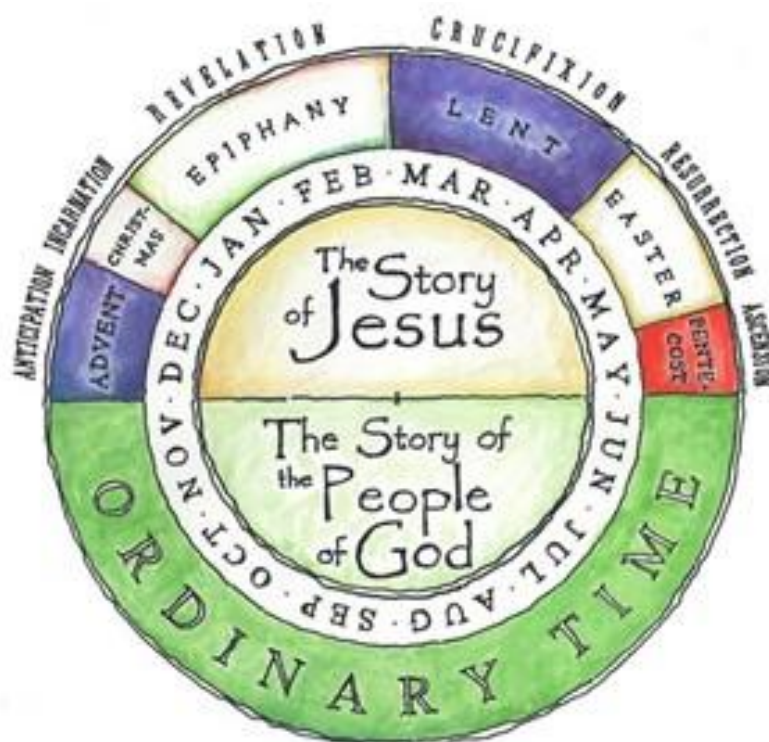
Gathering	Music (entry/exit)	appropriate / random, linked to theme, creates atmosphere, delivers a message
	Welcome	whether greetings exchanged and introduction made
	Atmosphere	extent to which act of worship is portrayed as special and important
Engaging	Focus	table, cloth, Bible, cross, candle, artefacts ICT / Visual / drama provides appropriate, linked relevant visual/factual information
	Awe and Wonder	sense given of marvel of world / creation
	Conviction	extent to which message is clear and compelling or words lack power and appear as paying lip service
Responding	Participation	extent to which learners involved in responding, partner talk, opportunities for some to participate directly
	Singing	whether there was appropriate hymn / song, quality, enthusiasm of participation
	Reflection	learners given time to pause and reflect
	Prayers	extent to which prayers are appropriate and learner friendly, whether learners are invited to respond
Sendi	Dismissal	whether the person takes charge, smiles, engages with some learners, says 'thank you'
Other aspects	Distinctively Anglican	clear reference is made to the Bible and Anglican Christian teaching and belief e.g. the Trinity - God, Jesus and Holy Spirit
	Inclusive	the worship reflects the multi faith / cultural nature of the world and feels inclusive to those of other and no faith
	Dynamism & Theatricality	was it a performance rather than an act of worship
	Open or Closed	does the leader give room for the children to build their own meanings / connections / links or are they told what to think?
	Age Appropriateness	are the language, concepts, ideas appropriate? Is it meaningful for the youngest yet appropriate for the oldest?

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## APPENDIX 2

### Liturgical Colours and seasons of the Christian year



Season	Liturgical Colour	Description
Advent	Purple	The period covering the four Sundays before the 25th December: Period of preparation for Christmas.
Christmas-tide	White or Gold	25 <sup>th</sup> December to 2 <sup>nd</sup> February
Gap Between	Green	Gap of Green until Tuesday before Ash Wednesday
Lent	Purple	The 40 days of preparation for Easter
Maundy Thursday	White or Gold	The Last Supper
Good Friday	Red	The Crucifixion
Easter-tide	White or Gold	Easter Day until Pentecost
Pentecost	Red	50 Days after Easter (lasts a week)
The Rest of the Year	Green	From Pentecost to Advent

Meaning of the colours	Purple	Penitence, preparation
	White or Gold	Joy, purity, innocence, Saints who are not martyrs
	Red	Fire & Blood, therefore Holy Spirit and Martyrdom
	Green	Everything else

In some places	Blue	The Blessed Virgin Mary
	Pink	Mothering Sunday (4 <sup>th</sup> in Lent) and 3 <sup>rd</sup> in Advent

Locally there may be different versions of the colours used.

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