

# Sonning Church of England Primary School

## Collective Worship guidance (website version)



### Introduction

At Sonning Church of England Primary School, our vision is to equip our children with the skills they need to make positive choices in everything they do. Like the wise man who built his house upon the rock (Matthew 7:24-25), we follow our Christian values to build strong foundations for the years ahead.

Guided by our values of **Love, Courage, Respect, Curiosity** and **Aspiration**, we provide a happy, exciting and encouraging environment where children can flourish and develop as individuals. We offer a challenging, broad and relevant curriculum that enables all children (regardless of their background, faith, race, ability or gender) to do their best and achieve well.

#### Psalm 100:1-4

##### A Psalm for giving grateful praise.

- 1 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
- 2 Worship the Lord with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.
- 3 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.
- 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving  
and his courts with praise;  
give thanks to him and praise his name.



At Sonning Church of England Primary School, we believe it is important that collective worship remains a relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish and to 'live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). This form of encounter through worship should be truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality. This is an approach that seeks to meet the needs of all, wherever they may be on their journey of faith and belief.

Information from this guidance document has been taken from a number of Dioecian sources, including ODBE.

### What is worship?

For Christians, worship is about coming into God's presence and giving glory; it is an act of praise and adoration through which Christians 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 also 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**

**Building strong foundations for the years ahead (Matthew 7:24-25)**

Love - Courage - Respect - Aspiration - Curiosity

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### **Collective Worship 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, inspiring and inclusive. Collective worship is a valued part of the culture of the school, breathing life into every aspect of the school day.

#### **Inclusive**

“All are included, have a voice and are listened to.”

Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. In a Church of England school pupils, their families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our school will come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. Pupils should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching. Collective worship should not be ‘done to’, but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. Although part of a national legislative framework, collective worship in our school grows out of our local context and out of our pupils’ experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

#### **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.”

Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to ‘do anything’. Rather, worship should provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. The metaphor of ‘warm fires and open doors’ captures this idea. The warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. There is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith. Importantly, the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable. Pupils and adults should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer should always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

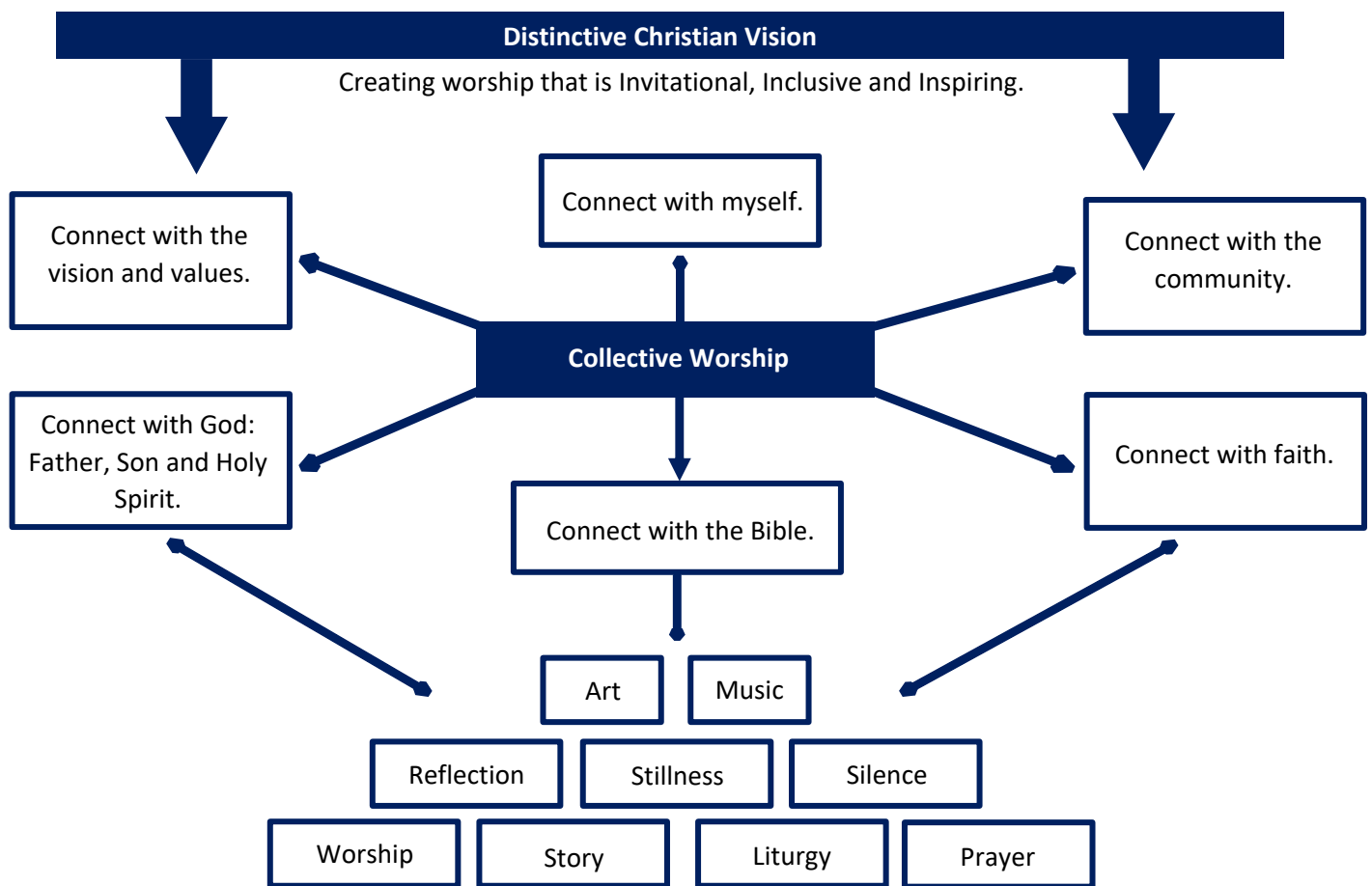
#### **Inspiring**

“Inspiring and creative, impacting the whole community and motivating them into action.”

Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in a Church school to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community’s behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

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Ask: Is Collective Worship the heartbeat of the school?

### Guidance on structuring Worship in the classroom

Worship in the classroom is a great way to spend quality time with your class, in a different way to teaching a National Curriculum lesson. 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.

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

Collective Worship, wherever you are, needs to follow the gather, engage, respond and send format. We use the following symbols to help pupils know, in a visual way, which part of collective worship they are in.



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### 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 content	<p>The next holy day almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.</p> <p><b>Acts 13:44</b></p>	<p>Jesus told them a story to teach them that they should keep on talking with God and not give up.</p> <p><b>Luke 18:1</b></p> <p>He taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables.</p> <p><b>Mark 4:2</b></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.</p> <p><b>2 Tim. 3:16,17</b></p>	<p>But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.</p> <p><b>Luke 15:6</b></p> <p>In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do.</p> <p><b>Matthew 6:14</b> (The Message)</p>	<p>So the word of God spread</p> <p><b>Acts 6:7</b></p> <p>I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.</p> <p><b>John 13:15</b></p>
Key features of each section of worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflection table out, Bible and candle, props for the act of worship.</li> <li>• Has a calm atmosphere been created?</li> <li>• Music on, focal image up.</li> <li>• Share a bidding prayer or greeting.</li> <li>• Light the candle.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sing together (or listen to a piece of music together).</li> <li>• Read from the Bible.</li> <li>• Share the message.</li> <li>• Use a variety of strategies (video, artwork, music, drama, props etc.).</li> <li>• Discuss and question the children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to respond – discuss, question, think.</li> <li>• Prayer time.</li> <li>• Reflection time, opportunity for silence or stillness.</li> <li>• Listen to a piece of music to reflect on.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blow candle out.</li> <li>• Send your class out with a thought or action.</li> <li>• Share a sending prayer / blessing as the children leave.</li> </ul>

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Love - Courage - Respect - Aspiration - Curiosity