

# Collective Worship Policy

St Faiths' C of E Primary School

**FORGIVENESS**

**Perseverance**

**Compassion**



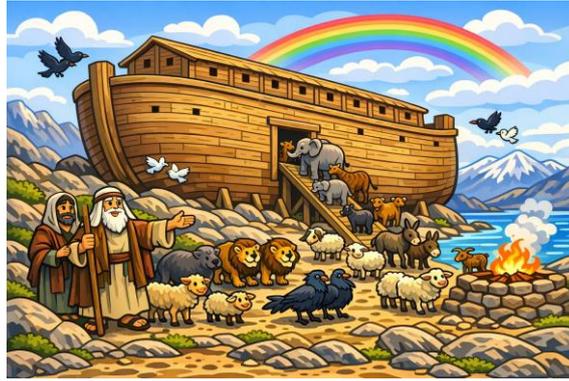
**Honesty**

**Responsibility**



Nebula  
where stars are born

# Collective Worship Policy



## Rationale

All acts of collective worship are in accordance with the founding Church of England Trust deed and the Ethos Statement in the school's Instruments of Government. School collective worship is an affirmation and celebration of the Christian values and ethos of the school.

Collective Worship is central to the life and purposes of our school. It is an inclusive act, which encourages reflection in all present, of all faiths and none, rooted in the Christian understanding of God as Trinity.

## Vision

Our vision is to create a school where everyone is encouraged, challenged and given the opportunity to be the best they can be. We are a community of care, built on Christian principles, where children and adults have a sense of belonging, are valued and their individuality is respected.

*A place for all to flourish*

**'I have come, so they may have life, and have it to the full' John 10:10**

## Our vision and values are embedded in the story of Noah's Ark

The story of Noah's Ark is our school narrative. It's a story loved by all, which encompasses our core values. Noah is the figure who directs our vision. Chosen because he was a good man, Noah was instructed to build an ark, big enough to support and save two of every animal on board. Noah did what God told him to do, and when the huge flood came, it saved his family and the animals from the flood. This story, in which our vision is rooted, helps children and adults to apply the vision in ways that point to Christ and His wider powers. This ensures that our vision is theologically rooted in the life of the school.

The story of Noah's Ark helps us to live by our vision, rather than merely knowing it. For example:

- **Compassion** – *Noah was a kind-hearted man, who worked hard with his family to ensure the ark was built and had space for 2 of each species to save them.*
- **Responsibility** – *Taking on the challenge of building the ark, and then ensuring the animals boarded two-by-two, Noah showed how responsible he was, being chosen by God to undertake such a significant task.*
- **Honesty** – *When God looked down upon the earth he had created, he saw wickedness and evil everywhere. That is, except Noah, who had 'found grace in the eyes of the Lord' [Genesis 6:8]. It was this pure and honest nature that meant Noah was saved and chosen by God to build his ark.*
- **Forgiveness** – *This value appears three-fold within the teachings of Noah's Ark: when we forgive, we choose the goodness of others over their faults; we experience God's goodness through our actions and we also experience our own capacities of goodness. Just as Noah and his family accepted God's reality, so too do we today.*
- **Perseverance** – *Most obviously, Noah's perseverance and determination to build the ark is a testament to his character. In addition, maintaining all creatures during the 40 days and following subsidence of the floods to ensure their survival is a great message we take from our story.*

## **Spirituality**

At St Faiths' C of E Primary School, we follow our Federation Spirituality Statement. We have defined spirituality as: "...the bitter-sweet yearning for beauty, truth, love and wonder beyond ourselves. It is a longing we pursue together and a treasure we glimpse in ourselves and one another and seek beyond us into eternity. It is life in all its fullness."

For our children, we have simplified our definition to:

"spirituality is the feeling that there is more to the world than we can touch and see."

Spirituality is included wherever relevant in Collective Worship.

## **Introduction**

As a Church school we want our children to have the opportunity to learn to worship and to grow in their understanding of God and of themselves. Collective Worship in our school is not simply a statutory duty. We believe that we are all made in the image of God and that worship should form an integral part of our lives.

We believe that at its heart, Collective Worship should provide an opportunity for pupils and staff to come together to learn, reflect and pray, sing, share and communicate their feelings with one another and to God.

As a Church of England VC Primary School, we see our Collective Worship as a central part of school life. Our Collective Worship policy fulfils the statutory requirements common to all schools according to the 1988 Education Reform Act (and consolidated in the 1996 Education Act).

## **The Legal Requirements**

There must be a daily act of collective worship for all pupils which takes account of their age and aptitude (Education Reform Act 1988). Parents have the right to withdraw children from Collective Worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children. Since we are a church school, however, Collective Worship is central to its life and work and is regarded as a very important part of children's education.

## **Anglican Faith and Practice**

We seek to provide acts of collective worship that reflect the faith and practice of the Church of England therefore: We use the Bible as a sourcebook for inspiration and learning and make pupils familiar with the Lord's Prayer, psalms and other passages of scripture. We provide opportunities to discover the value of silence and quiet reflection. We observe the major Christian festivals and celebrations.

In our school, we aim to provide a worship space that is attractive and well-prepared with appropriate thought having been given to space, seating, ambience and music.

## **Aims**

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

At St Faiths' C of E Primary School, we believe that children learn best in a happy, but challenging, safe environment, so we encourage participation in a wide range of physical and creative learning opportunities within a broad balanced curriculum.

Our aim is that our worship contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children and staff. Our policy for Collective Worship supports this by:

- Recognising that Collective Worship is an important opportunity to provide opportunities for our pupils' and staff spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Ensuring the daily act of collective worship will be distinctly Christian in content and will follow the liturgical calendar
- Providing a daily act of Collective Worship for all pupils which enables them to:
  - ▲ worship God
  - ▲ strengthen and support the school community, giving expression to and reaffirming the Christian values of the school to develop a community spirit, a common ethos and shared values

- ▲ celebrate the gifts that each person brings to the school community, recognising the uniqueness of each individual made in the image of God
  - ▲ consider spiritual and moral issues, reflect on personal development, multi-faith festivals and curriculum aptitudes
  - ▲ respond to the worship offered
  - ▲ be introduced to and respond to Christian language, symbolism and major Christian celebrations and experience stillness and quietness
  - ▲ experience a variety of forms of prayer and meditation. These might include praise, seeking forgiveness or quiet reflection
  - ▲ begin to understand the nature and purpose of worship
  - ▲ encourage reflection on the puzzling questions that life poses and response to the wonder and mystery of the world around us, fostering an appreciation of the created world and an awareness of our responsibility for it.
  - ▲ enable children to explore their own beliefs.
- Ensuring collective worship, whether in assembly or class time, will:
  - ▲ be inspiring and transformational
  - ▲ be led by senior leaders, staff, children, clergy and visitors.
  - ▲ develop the Christian vision, values and ethos of the school and focus on our school Christian values
  - ▲ include a range of creative opportunities e.g. music, silence, symbol, drama
  - ▲ involve pupils through members of the Worship group opening and closing worship and through pupils writing their own prayer
  - ▲ celebrate and give thanks for the achievements within the school, local and international community and occasions of significance, including festivals
  - ▲ provide a foundation for a mature understanding and practice of worship in the future
  - ▲ take place in the school hall, outdoors, in classrooms or the church
  - ▲ respect the right of parents to withdraw their children for collective worship

### **Organisation of Collective Worship**

We hold a daily act of collective worship in our school and this forms part of each assembly. The whole school, including members of staff, meet together in the hall each day. Collective Worship usually lasts for fifteen minutes. We conduct Collective Worship in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that this is a special time, a period of reflection. We expect children to behave in an appropriate way; we ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and to participate fully in prayer and hymns. The Lord's Prayer is shared regularly. We have a lit candle and Christian symbols at the front of the hall, to act as a focal point during Collective Worship. The objects on the prayer table help to embed our key values.

Staff share the responsibility for leading Collective Worship. This shows the children that all staff have shared values and that we want to instill those values during our worship. We are regularly joined by John Hindley, our Foundation Governor, who leads a Collective Worship for the children fortnightly, as well as taking part in other activities throughout the school.

Children are invited to pass the blessing at the end of collective worship and also sometimes lead prayer.

Some of our assemblies reflect the achievements and learning of the children: assembly times provide opportunities to celebrate success. We encourage the children to participate in assemblies by showing their work to the other children and raising issues discussed in their class or through Circle Time Meetings. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of school. They provide an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognised.

## **Content and Approach**

We have developed a range of themes and topics through which collective worship takes place. We have a different Christian Value for each half term. These are taken from our 5 core values, with other complementary values interwoven on a 3-year cycle. The current list is included in the Collective Worship documentation. Key themes include: courage, hope, compassion, justice and God's Trinity. There are regular links to our key values and we reference these within our themes, stories and experiences that we explore within Collective Worship. The school explores themes through stories, hymns, prayers and responses:

- ▲ Celebration of the major festivals of Christianity and of other faiths
- ▲ Presentation of Bible stories
- ▲ Topical matters from the news or the locality
- ▲ Literature with implicit or explicit religious teaching
- ▲ Appreciation of the natural world and human activity
- ▲ Appreciation of the talents, achievements and work of ourselves and others
- ▲ Visitors who represent organisations who have a brief acceptable to the school
- ▲ Prayer in different forms – formal, pupils' own, silence
- ▲ Use of music
- ▲ Appropriate focal points and artefacts
- ▲ Participation by the children

Children are encouraged to think of the occasion as a special time and to reflect on how we can apply Christian teaching to our lives in school. The Head of School and staff who lead collective worship plan keep plans of collective worship. Collective worship will generally follow the structure below and include a prayer:

### **Gather**

Coming in to music, lighting of the candle, call and response

### **Engage**

Story, music, visual aids, drama, puppets, quizzes or activities.

### **Respond**

Reflection, prayer, discussion, questioning or singing

### **Send**

Prayer, blowing out of the candle or final thought

Any whole school notices will be given at the end of the session, once our worship has concluded.

Singing is often part of Collective Worship and thus can also be when new hymns and songs are introduced and taught. Collective Worship may also take the form of a 'Celebration Assembly'. This is a celebration of the children's work through the week and an opportunity to recognise individual achievements.

## **Learning Expectations and Intended Outcomes**

Education, celebration, praise and hope are essential features of our worship at St Faiths' C of E Primary School. We aim to make children aware of what it means to be a community committed to serving and caring for each other, God and our environment. In so doing we hope to create an atmosphere in which pupils are invited rather than compelled to explore issues for themselves, reflect upon and learn from their own and others' experiences, develop sensitivity and a sense of wonder, awe and mystery for the world of which they are part.

## **Special Services and Visitors**

We hold some special services throughout the year. Our Foundation Governor leads collective worship every other week and comes into school to participate in our special services and Vision and Values afternoons. Special services include Harvest, Christmas, Christingle and Easter. Parents, carers and the wider whole school community are invited to join us for some of these services. The children participate in them, presenting readings and singing hymns. All visitors are welcome to attend our collective worship.

### **Inclusion and withdrawal**

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. However, parents/carers do have a legal right to withdraw their children from all or part of worship. Before making the decision to exercise that right, parents/carers are encouraged to discuss the issues with the Head of School. Teachers are generally required to take part in Collective Worship, and to uphold the Christian ethos upon which it is based. However, at the discretion of the headteacher and governing board teachers may request permission to withdraw from worship.

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability. We therefore aim to make Collective Worship accessible to all and accommodate ourselves to individual needs when appropriate.

### **Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development**

We recognise that although SMSC development should be fostered across the whole curriculum, acts of collective worship provide a multitude of opportunities in this area. For example, children will be encouraged to reflect on and celebrate the deeper meanings of life, consider their own behaviour and recognise the need for forgiveness, appreciate the contributions of others and respond to their needs, value their own culture and the cultures of others.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

We monitor and evaluate collective worship by keeping records of our collective worship and informally questioning adults and children as to their views on its effectiveness. More formally, Governors are invited in to monitor collective worship and record their findings. Feedback is shared and any action points implemented. The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

At St Faiths' C of E Primary School, we offer pupils opportunities to explore and share beliefs and consider the importance of prayer, meditation and silence. We encourage them to consider the relevance of ideas, beliefs and values to their own lives, to think about the needs of others and what it means to be part of a community. The opportunity is given to put into practice the values of the school. Collective Worship offers a time to celebrate achievement and worthwhile or positive behaviour, thus contributing to our community.

