



**St Michael's**  
C.E. Primary School

# **Collective Worship Policy**

Last reviewed on:	March 2024
Next review due by:	September 2026

## Our Theologically Rooted Christian Vision

### ***Courage to Flourish in the Love of God***

**‘I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full’ (John 10:10)**



**[Therefore],**

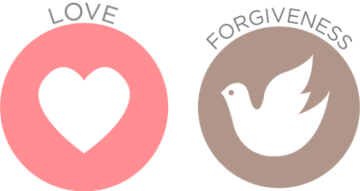
**‘Be strong and courageous... the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.’ (Joshua 1:9)**

These biblical texts underpin our vision summary, ‘Courage to Flourish in the Love of God’. Jesus’ words from the New Testament describe his desire for everyone to be a full and flourishing version of their created selves, experiencing life in all its vibrant fullness, individually and in community. Our ambition is for everyone to encounter this fullness through the life and work of the school, whatever their background, beliefs or circumstances. God’s words to Joshua from the Old Testament illustrate how life, and learning, can be challenging, bringing setbacks and discouragement. These words inspire us to keep on going in those circumstances, confident that God watches over us and walks beside us.

The joining of these biblical texts is meaningful for the particular circumstances of our school community. It gives coherence to our aspirational vision that will grow courage and resilience as enablers of ‘life in all its fullness’ for everyone. To support our vision, we have seven overarching Christian values.

## Our Core Christian Values

<u><b>Value</b></u>	<u><b>Biblical texts that underpin our values</b></u>
	<p>Philippians 4:13</p> <p>‘I can do all things through him who strengthens me.’</p>
	<p>John 1:5</p> <p>‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.’</p>

	<p>1 Corinthians 13:4-8</p> <p>‘Love is patient and kind... it does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.’</p> <p>1 John 1:9</p> <p>‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us’</p>
	<p>Proverbs 3:5-6</p> <p>‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.’</p>
	<p>Hebrews 10:24</p> <p>‘Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good.’</p>
	<p>1 Thessalonians 5:18</p> <p>‘Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you’</p>

## Intent

At St Michael’s, Collective Worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school’s vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. Our school serves pupils, staff and parents from a variety of backgrounds and faiths. Therefore, Collective Worship in our school aims to be inspirational, invitational, and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

## Aims

Collective Worship in our Church of England school will:

- Be the driver by which the school's Christian Vision is explored and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on our core Christian Values (above) and develop virtues such as resilience, respect, resourcefulness, and readiness to learn, together with determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to spiritual and academic flourishing for children and adults.
- Help children and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Provide an experience of worship that will offer opportunities for those present to observe and/or respond to the presence, power and peace of God as understood by Christians. This will always be invitational, offering an opportunity to take part whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all children and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship, and reflection.
- Enable all children and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable children and adults to work together to develop their skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of Collective Worship in ways that lead to improving practice.
- Help children to become familiar with Christian language and symbolism and the cycle of the Church year so that they are offered a pattern of meanings and a framework into which they can begin to integrate experience.
- Explore a variety of ways of praying, giving children the opportunity to form their own prayers using multi-sensory foci and introduce them to some well known Christian prayers, as well as a variety of prayers of thanksgiving before mealtimes and home time.

## Church of England Guidance

Our policy for Collective Worship is set in the context of and gives life to our Christian Vision and Values. It mirrors the [guidance from the Church of England](#) for Collective Worship – **Inclusive, Invitational, Inspiring (2021)**. This guidance document has been produced to challenge, guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities, encouraging them to reflect on

their practice and to ensure that Collective Worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish.

## **Legal Requirements**

There must be a daily act of Collective Worship in all maintained schools for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective Worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets of its foundation and consistent with the denomination or religious tradition of the school in schools with a religious character. Worship at St Michael's is distinctly Christian and reflects Anglican traditions.

The local academy board of the school have the responsibility for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. They are also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community in consultation with the headteacher.

## **The Right of Withdrawal**

St Michael's is a Church of England school that educates children from a variety of religious backgrounds in a multicultural and multiracial communities. We work together to promote tolerance and respect for others and to break down prejudice and mistrust. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be as hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. There is no intention to compromise or undermine the faith in which the children are being brought up. Our aim is to develop in all children an awareness, acceptance and appreciation of others through learning about each other's customs and beliefs.

We acknowledge that there will always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools. The Church of England recognises the right of withdrawal from Collective Worship for those children or adults who wish to exercise this option. Parents wishing to exercise their right to withdraw their child should contact the Headteacher to discuss this. It may be helpful to establish:

- The elements of worship in which the parent would object to the child taking part
- The other aspects of school life that are impacted by the Christian foundation of the school such as prayer and reflective areas
- The practical implications of withdrawal
- Whether the parent will require any advanced notice of such worship, and if so, how much

If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply.

## **Inclusive, Invitational, Inspiring**

*“Church of England schools are committed to offering high quality collective worship. They are places that recognise and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing the school’s Christian vision. In practice this means that structure, planning, evaluation, participation, collaboration, and inspection of worship are all taken seriously by the school and by the diocese. We strive to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish and to ‘live life in all its fullness’ John 10:10. Collective Worship is seen as more than a daily ‘awe and wonder’ moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.*

*We aim for Collective Worship to 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.”*

[Inclusive, Invitational, Inspiring - The Church of England Education \(2021\)](#)

### **Inclusive**

In our Collective Worship we meet, explore, question, and respond to others and, for some, to God. We seek to ensure that all children, their families and other adults in our school community encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. We recognise that children and adults in our school come from different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. We acknowledge that everyone is at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. We give children and staff the opportunity to think and ask questions. There is space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. We take care to ensure that the language used by those facilitating collective worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective Worship will invite and welcome meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including children and adults. We value the individual experiences, of those in our school community, that they bring to collective worship. In our school, inclusion is expressed through some children and adult involvement in the planning, leading and the evaluation of collective worship. We

ensure that our collective school grows out of the local context and out of children's and adults' experiences, including their cultural backgrounds.

## **Invitational**

We aim for our worship to be consistently invitational. There is no compulsion for children or adults to do or say anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. We provide opportunities for children and adults 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. Children and adults are only invited to pray if they wish to do so and are invited to pray in their own way. Invitation to prayer is always to be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies used in Collective Worship reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship. It connects with the theme wherever possible. They are used to enable children and adults to explore the sacred, to educate and engage. We strive to choose music to reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community and the spiritual life of our school.

## **Inspiring**

Children and adults can expect the worship they encounter in our school to be inspirational. Worship should enable children and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate children 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, we aim for children and adults to be inspired to become courageous advocates for justice. Collective Worship will encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

## **Provision for Collective Worship**

The rhythm of daily worship in our school allows children and adults to step away from the rigour of the classroom, creating a space for an encounter with faith in God. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on larger questions of meaning and purpose. Our school's Collective Worship practices provide a shared set of symbols, signs, words and actions and traditions which give our whole school community a language upon which it can draw, in times of joy and grief. Collective Worship is key to fostering a sense of fellowship and cohesion within our school community. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, this time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community. Throughout the year, we meet to celebrate and mark

seasons in the Church calendar, such as Lent and Advent. Other important events in the school year, such as the start and end of the academic year, are marked with special services, often in St Michael and All Angels Church.

Children and adults will encounter the practice of regular prayer and worship as a normal part of the life of the school. These activities help provide a rhythm and stillness as a pattern of community life. Worship in our school will follow a recognisable structure that will help focus worship on important themes. We use a welcome or prayer followed by a consideration of a Bible passage or story that we can then reflect on through discussion, prayer, silent reflection or music. It will be something that children and adults may want to share and discuss with others in school, in the community and at home. In this way worship overflows into our lives and choices.

The general pattern of our worship reflects that of an Anglican Church service:

Gather	Gathering in a space with others	Stillness Peace Reflection Together/community Welcome Releasing Expecting Setting the atmosphere	<i>Instrumental music</i> <i>Images</i> <i>A question to think about</i> <i>Worship songs to join in</i> <i>Lighting candles</i> <i>Bringing things to the worship table including liturgical colours</i> <i>Liturgical or other greeting</i>
Engage	Engaging, getting involved	Hearing Seeing Learning Wondering Asking Questioning Experiences Sharing Thinking	<i>Bible stories</i> <i>Other stories</i> <i>Images</i> <i>Film/drama</i> <i>News</i> <i>Vision and values</i> <i>Talk partners</i> <i>Something to hold</i> <i>Church calendar</i> <i>Community joys and sorrows</i>
Respond	Responding to an invitation	Taking action Acting for oneself Acting for others Living differently Putting something right Making a change Making a commitment	<i>Known prayers</i> <i>Prepared prayers</i> <i>Responsive prayers</i> <i>Sung prayers</i> <i>In the moment prayers</i> <i>Sensory prayers</i> <i>Prayer walk</i>



		Worshipping Praying Thinking about what I can learn about God, myself, others, the world	<i>Teaspoon prayers (TSP)</i> <i>Hand of prayer</i> <i>Prayer tree/box/space/garden</i> <i>Fill the blank prayers</i> <i>Meditation</i>
Send	Sending out/living life differently	Being inspired to: Live well or differently To pass the message on To encourage and be encouraged To love and be loved To value and be valued To make a difference To make the world a little more like God intended	<i>Known prayers</i> <i>Sending liturgy</i> <i>Take aways</i> <i>Clergy blessing</i> <i>Sing as you leave</i> <i>Leave in silence</i> <i>Leave when ready</i> <i>Leave to music</i>

## Collective Worship Sequence

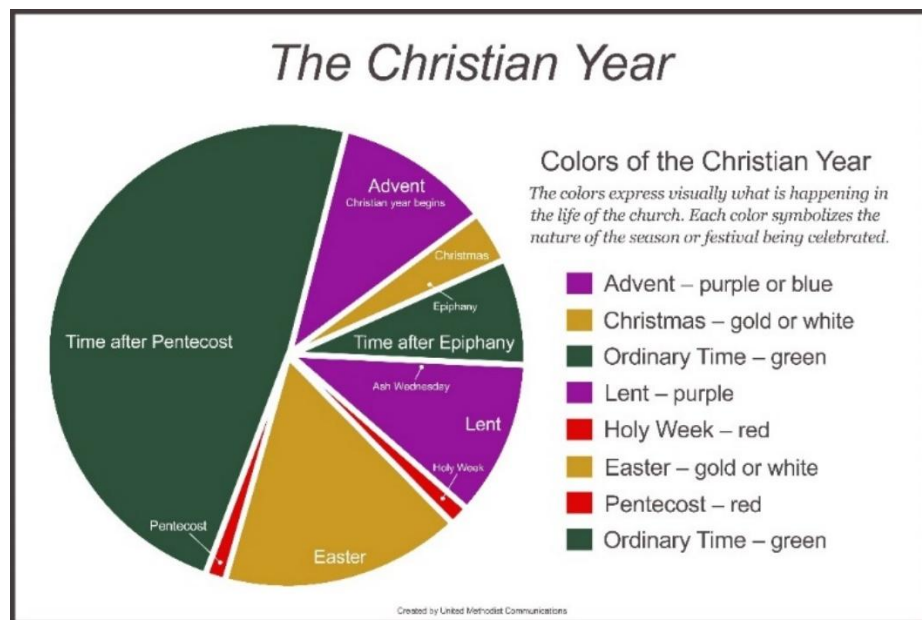
Monday	Whole school worship	Reflect on our school vision and values, introduce the Bible story for the week linked to this half term's value, worship linked to the Church year	Senior Leadership Team/Reverend Ruth
Tuesday	Phase worship	<i>Living Our Vision and Values</i> Further explore through photographs what it means to live out our vision and values in practice	Phase leaders/Teachers
Wednesday	Worship through song	We learn worship songs linked to the focus and value and learn from them	Teachers
Thursday	Class worship	<i>Space Makers</i> Explore how to navigate the world around us through stilling, noticing, dwelling, mending and blessing	Teachers/Pupil Worship Leaders
Friday	Celebration worship	Celebrating our achievements, community and lived out Christian values	Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher

As we are an Anglican school we reflect aspects of Anglican worship in the following ways:

- We use the Bible as a source of Christian teaching and give it a prominent place in our worship
- We follow the cycle of the Anglican year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost and some saints' days
- We use liturgical colours for our worship focus
- We use Christian symbols and artefacts, exploring their meaning for Christians
- Our worship follows a liturgical pattern of gathering, engaging, responding and sending
- Using Anglican sentences and responses (e.g. The Lord be with you... and also with you)

Throughout the year, we also celebrate a range of non-Christian festivals such as Chinese New Year, Eid, Diwali etc. to promote diversity and respect within our multicultural school and local community.

## Liturgical Calendar



Collective Worship in our school follows the liturgical calendar. In Christian churches, one of four colours – purple, green, gold (or white) and red – referred to as 'liturgical colours', are used for altar linen, clergy robes and various hangings. At St Michael's, our focus table covering follows these colours.

The colour reflects the season, so that for instance in Advent purple is used, a colour of royalty because we are preparing to welcome the coming of a king. Purple is used again in Lent because it also symbolises suffering and pain.

At Christmas and Easter, the colour changes to white or gold, both bright optimistic colours for festivals, times for joy and celebration.

Between the festivals, green cloths symbolise all living things, renewal and promise of new life.

And finally, red is the colour of fire used in churches to celebrate Pentecost and saints' days.

## **Planning**

Each half term, a scheme of Collective Worship is planned for staff by the Collective Worship Lead. Whilst we have chosen seven Christian values to be our core school values, we recognise that there are several important Christian values that we aim to teach our pupils. Each half term there is a focus value, linked to our school vision, which forms the basis of our Collective Worship. Weekly Bible stories and songs are chosen by Reverend Ruth and the Collective Worship Lead to specifically teach the school value for each half term.

## **Living Our Vision and Values**

For our Phase Worship, we use the resources from *Living Our Vision and Values*. Photographs are used which depict children showing how Christian vision and values inform and inspire their day to day lives. Pupils discuss the practical ways that values can inform the choices that they make and the ways in which they think about the challenges that face our world.

Four elements comprise each act of worship: look, learn, reflect and pray (this complements our 'gather, engage, respond, send' pattern). The main stimulus, a photograph of pupils expressing what their value 'looks like' in a school context, ensures that the learning is rooted in children's own experience from the outset. Open questions are phrased to facilitate discussion about the 'words of wisdom', which may be a brief text from the Bible or a quote or proverb. Time is then given to reflect on the learning that has taken place. A short prayer concludes the act of worship. A final section entitled 'living it out' provides an opportunity to explore and understand the Christian roots of the school's vision in relation to the theme of worship and to ensure that the vision retains its relevance and focus.

## **Space Makers**

For our Class Worship, we use the resources from *Space Makers*. *Space Makers* is designed to embrace some of the ancient wisdom of the Christian tradition. Worship is based on five contemplative practices: stilling, noticing, dwelling, mending and blessing. These exercises are designed to normalise the contemplative within the lives of children. Instilling a love of contemplative practice can see children flourish as human ‘beings’: finding peace and hope, realising their dreams and finding deep fulfilment.

Five contemplative practices:

1. Stilling – seeing things more clearly. Settling, using breathing techniques, and becoming aware of oneself and one’s surroundings.
2. Noticing – becoming aware of how life can energise or drain us. By noticing the absence of faith, hope and love in moments of unhappiness and difficulty and the presence of faith, hope and love in moments of comfort, children are encouraged to act, choose and seek consolidation – that which energises and inspires.
3. Dwelling – finding meaning in the words of the Bible. Listening to, dwelling with and experiencing how inclusive words, phrases or scenes from the Bible can ‘come alive’ for us as individuals.
4. Mending – forgiveness and healing. A brief activity using stones to represent life’s hurt, pain and sorrows. By forgiving ourselves and others, we free ourselves to be, and to encounter, in a different way.
5. Blessing – focusing on human flourishing and growth. Having received blessing through the other four practices, how do we now bless our families, homes, school and communities? This practice uses the metaphor of a root, producing a shoot, producing a fruit. What fruit might emerge for all to share?

## **The Wows, Ows and Nows of Life**

- The ‘WOW’ Times – explores the spiritual possibilities of fantastic times
- The ‘OW’ Times – explores the spiritual possibilities of hard times
- The ‘NOW’ Times – explores the spiritual possibilities of ordinary, quiet moments and prayer

Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils to become aware of the importance of reflection and how our positive and negative experiences can be formative. It also provides a real sense of being present (now moments) which are often linked to invitations to pray.

Through daily Collective Worship, pupils are offered a space and a place for hearing Christian stories and teachings. They are offered an understanding of worship by being invited to participate in, or

observe, spiritual practices such as prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible and liturgy and are introduced to different musical traditions.

Opportunities to reflect on the joys of life such as beauty and joy of the world are given, as well as time to reflect and empathise with the low moments of disappointment or pain. Pupils are given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. In this way pupils are offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

## **Working in Partnership**

### **Worship Leaders**

Each class from Years 1-6 has an elected 'Worship Leader'. Their role is to help lead Collective Worship in our school, help create prayer spaces around school and evaluate the effectiveness of Collective Worship. Our Worship Leaders meet regularly to create resources for prayer spaces, to discuss what they enjoy about Collective Worship, to choose songs for the following week's Worship and to share ideas for improvement. An important role for our Worship Leaders is to open and close every Collective Worship.

### **Children's Contribution to Collective Worship**

Children are encouraged to take part in Collective Worship in a number of ways:

- Setting up for Collective Worship
- Taking part during Collective Worship
- Leading Collective Worship
- Being consulted for their views about themes and hymns
- Writing prayers
- Evaluating worship on our Collective Worship blackboard (I thought... I felt... I will...)

### **Parent Partnership**

Good relationships, understanding and partnership with parents and the local community are signs of a successful school. Therefore, parents, religious communities, headteachers and governors are encouraged to discuss Collective Worship in school, just as they would discuss any other important aspect of school life.

Parents are welcome to attend when worship takes place at St Michael's Church. When a class leads Collective Worship, their parents are invited to share in the worship. In addition, parents take a full part in Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Leaving Services.

## **Developing Staff Expertise and Knowledge**

We consistently work to build up the expertise of staff, children, clergy, and other adults in facilitating Collective Worship in our school. We strive to ensure that:

- Staff leading Collective Worship, including clergy, have access to regular training, primarily through the diocesan education team.
- Staff, including clergy, have access to high quality and current resources.
- Pupil Worship Leaders are supported, encouraged, and resourced to contribute to meaningful acts of worship.
- Those from outside agencies and Church groups invited into the school to facilitate are properly briefed about the school, its children, context and the school's Christian vision and values.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- The Local Academy Board ensures monitoring of the impact of collective worship; this monitoring includes and meaningfully involves children and staff voice.
- There is a named member of staff responsible for Collective Worship who ensures that appropriate policy and practice are in place and publicly available.
- Weekly feedback is gained from pupils and Worship Leaders on our Collective Worship blackboard. This feedback is then used to improve the following week's Worship.
- Feedback is regularly gained from staff to evaluate children's engagement in Collective Worship and to identify areas for development.
- Comments from parents are also considered.

## **Disseminating the policy**

We ensure that this policy is known to all staff, governors, parents and, as appropriate, to all pupils. This policy is available on our school website.