



Time to Reflect



*A guide to Collective Worship in
Surrey's maintained schools*

*Published: June 2015
Updated: March 2021
Date of next review: March 2026*



'Time to Reflect' – a guide to collective worship

Contents	(all headings in blue are electronically hyperlinked)	Page
Introduction		3
What's changed since 2015?		4
What do we mean by 'Collective Worship'?		5
What are the legal requirements regarding collective worship?		5
– Modifications to the law: 'Determinations'		7
Interpreting the law regarding collective worship		
– 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'		
– 'reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief'		
– 'an opportunity to worship'		
Collective worship and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		8
What is good practice in collective worship?		10
Encouraging reflection in collective worship		11
Prayer in collective worship		12
Music in collective worship		12
Visitors to collective worship		13
Planning and recording of collective worship		14
Some FAQs		14
Appendix A: Sample acts of worship & planning templates		17
Appendix B: Self-evaluation grades for schools' collective worship		25
Appendix C: The determination process		27
Appendix D: Perspectives on worship from members of SACRE		31

Reference documents:

- The 1988 ERA www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/contents (See 'Chapter I section 6 & 7')
- The 1996 ERA www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents (See 'Chapter III sections 385-388')
- The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/31/contents (See 'Part 2, Chapter VI sections 70 & 71')
- Although a much-debated document, [Circular 1/94](#) is still listed as the non-statutory guidance for Acts of Collective Worship on the DfE website
- Letter from Education Minister Cheryl Gillan (November 1996)
- 'Collective Worship Revisited' – a paper for all who are or should be interested in Collective Worship', published by NASACRE, April 2012 – for information about NASACRE, go to www.nasacre.org.uk
- 'School Inspection Handbook' published by Ofsted (November 2019) available from this [link](#)
- 'Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in Schools (February 2014) available from this [link](#)
- 'Collective Worship and Religious Observance in Schools': An Evaluation of Law & Policy in the UK – Arts and Humanities Research Council, ed. Cumper & Mawhinny (November 2015)
- 'A New Settlement' (June 2015) and 'A New Settlement: Revised' (July 2018) – Clarke & Woodhead
- 'Collective Worship Information', published by the Department of Education (February 2020) available from this [link](#)
- Grades for self-evaluation of collective worship, Newham SACRE

Introduction

"Time to Reflect - A Guide to Collective Worship in Surrey County Schools" was published initially in January 2015, but in line with good practice, was reviewed and revised by Surrey SACRE during the Summer term of 2020.

This revised document outlines proposals for collective worship from two reports published since January 2015: though neither of these resulted in any changes to legislation, the main recommendations are featured in a new section within this introduction 'What's changed since 2015?' and provide some additional support for the guidance offered in **'Time to Reflect'**.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be a feature of Ofsted Inspections, and it should also be noted that weaknesses in a school's SMSC provision could be a limiting factor in Ofsted's evaluation of their overall effectiveness (*para 168, Nov 2019 School Inspection Handbook*). Schools may wish to include a copy of this guidance with other evidence when being inspected, to demonstrate their commitment to providing acts of collective worship that contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools have their own inspection arrangements and Diocesan Guidelines, they may find some useful ideas within this document.

We are all aware of the many opportunities and challenges surrounding the whole area of collective worship in schools. These are issues which promote hard thinking and profound debate amongst all people, irrespective of their own personal beliefs.

SACRE would encourage all schools to pay particular attention to the section **'Interpreting the law'**, as it may come as a surprise to many that the legal definition of the act of collective worship is broad and offers schools significant freedoms, which need to be properly understood. We have attempted to keep this document as concise, practical and informative as possible, aware that many of the philosophical and even political questions surrounding collective worship in schools are, even five years on from SACRE's original guidance, still unresolved. In the light of current legislation, we offer the following guidance material, which we hope will enable schools to meet the legal requirements for collective worship in a way which is meaningful and enriching for the whole school community.

We also include revised Appendices, which now contain 'grades' to support schools' self-evaluation. We are grateful to Newham SACRE for their permission to include this section. Each section of the contents page is now hyperlinked so that the electronic version of the document can be easily navigated. The Appendices also include some thoughts from faith and belief members of the SACRE about worship: this may help schools to further understand the backgrounds and experiences of pupils who are a part of their community and assist when collective worship is being planned to ensure that it as inclusive as possible.

Our thanks go especially to the members of SACRE for their input and also to the authors of the various reports and documents which have been referenced in revising this guidance.

Surrey SACRE, March 2021



What's changed since 2015?

The simple answer is, 'Nothing'! Despite much debate and several significant reports, all containing similar proposals in regard to the act of collective worship and summarised in this section, legislation remains unchanged.

In fact, most recent information from the [Department for Education](#) (February 2020) about collective worship reiterates quite clearly the statutory requirement that *'all state-funded schools are required to provide a daily act of collective worship for pupils aged between 5 to 18 years, through legislation for maintained schools or their funding agreements for academies'* and that all schools without a religious designation *'are required to provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, which means that it "reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination"'*

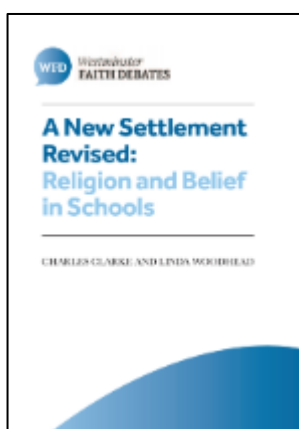
Since January 2015, two significant briefing papers have been published, both containing recommendations for collective worship. These both give weight to the need to revisit and reform current policy.



Collective Worship and Religious Observance in Schools: an Evaluation of Law and Policy in the UK – Peter Cumper & Alison Mawhinney (Nov 2015)

This weighty report gathers together current policy and practice in collective worship (called 'religious observance' in Scotland) across the UK and reflects on the pros and cons of three potential options in regard to collective worship: maintaining the status quo, abolishing the duty and reforming it. This third option would to some degree align practice across the UK and re-engage the respective governments in the task of reframing collective worship, learning from the difficulties experienced by schools in implementing the current duty.

Although the authors do not state which is their preferred option, their final conclusions suggest that a significant reform is necessary across the UK in order to make statutory expectations clear, reflect the contemporary needs of society and ensure that the right of withdrawal is consistent.



A New Settlement Revised: Religion and Belief in Schools – Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead (July 2018)

The statutory arrangements for collective worship were considered in the original June 2015 document and then the authors' original proposals revised in July 2018. The authors comment that:

'The response to our (2015) pamphlet demonstrated a very real and widely held concern that abolition of the statutory requirement altogether might easily lead to the disappearance of the school assembly altogether, despite the very widely shared view that the event is an important and central part of the school day. There was a fear that the sometimes acute pressure upon school time might be too great and could lead to marginalising the school assembly altogether.'

The revised report recommends that the current wording in Circular 1/94 (*para 51*) be replaced by:- **'All pupils in attendance at maintained schools and academies shall take part in a regular assembly or act of collective worship in keeping with the values and ethos of the school and reflecting the diversity and character of the school community'** and that the role of SACREs should be to 'help schools to find the best way to fulfil their obligations today'.

We consider that the advice within 'Time to Reflect' already goes a long way in achieving this aim.

What do we mean by 'Collective' Worship?

Collective worship in schools is not the same as **corporate** worship within faith communities. **Corporate worship** is a voluntary activity where the whole faith community is striving to be one body, heart, soul....family.

Schools are required by law to hold an act of collective worship, recognising that it is different to that held by faith communities, which is the free association of worshippers. **Collective worship** is a gathering of many different individuals, children and adults, from diverse backgrounds, and much of this document will be spent helping schools to understand how the act of collective worship can celebrate and honour these differences whilst gathering together. The distinction should be understood by the whole school community and borne in mind by those organising and leading it.

There has been much discussion on the origin and meaning of the word 'worship'. Here are two definitions:

- *'worship' comes from the Anglo Saxon 'worth-ship' i.e. to give worth or value to something or someone. Within this definition collective worship could be seen to be a daily gathering of the school community, or groups within the school, in order to explore shared values, and areas of shared concern and worth.*
- *the most common usage of the word 'worship' implies reverence paid to a supreme divine being or power & an openness to the transcendent.*

In schools there will be a wide range of pupils and adults, many of whom have non-religious beliefs. Care will therefore need to be taken to achieve a balance between applying both definitions. There is additional material in [Appendix D](#) of this document, including some thoughts from members of SACRE regarding religious and non-religious perspectives on worship.

What are the Legal Requirements regarding Collective Worship?



A paper entitled 'Collective Worship Revisited', published by NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) in April 2012, reports: *'Under the heading 'State schools not providing group worship', a survey for BBC local radio in September 2011 reported that '64% of the 500 parents questioned said their child did not attend daily acts of collective worship and 60% of the 1,743 adults asked said the legislation should not be enforced'. Notwithstanding the limited scope of the sample and the possible misunderstanding among those questioned at the use of the term 'collective worship' rather than the more commonly used 'assembly', these findings confirm a trend, well understood by professionals and SACREs.'*

The findings of the Surrey SACRE questionnaire regarding collective worship (October 2013), and visits to schools since, confirm this trend within our local context, particularly at secondary level. The purpose of this document is to consider some of the possible reasons why collective worship may be misunderstood (and therefore why schools may be failing in their duty to provide it) and to reflect on its place within school life, not least in providing significant opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Legal requirements

The place of collective worship in schools is upheld by law and has been so since 1944. The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) affirmed its statutory position, relaxing some of the restrictions on the grouping and timing of Collective Worship, confirming what had become widespread practice

in schools. The subsequent 1996 Education Act and 1998 School Standards and Framework Act further confirmed the requirements, since when there has been no change to this primary legislation, by which duty schools remain bound.

each pupil in attendance at a community, foundation or voluntary school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship (1998 School Standards & Framework Act – Part II Chapter 6 para 70 (1))

There are only two exceptions to this:

- parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship
- pupils in Y12 and above [the sixth form] may also exercise their right to withdraw.

If parents do make a request to withdraw their child, or a student in sixth form, SACRE recommends that careful discussion should take place between all concerned, especially in the light of the suggestions for inclusive worship contained within this document, so that informed choices can be made. Staff may also exercise the right of withdrawal.

The main provisions for collective worship are contained in Sections 6 and 7 of the Education Reform Act 1988, and in Chapter VI 'Religious Education and worship' (sections 70 & 71) and Schedule 20 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act.

The law states that collective worship in all local authority maintained schools must be:

- daily for all registered pupils on the school premises;
- organised to allow pupils to be withdrawn if their parents have so requested;
- 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', (which suggests that some do not need to be);
- non-denominational (i.e. it should not reflect any particular Christian denomination).

The last two bullet points are expanded on in the next section '**Interpreting the law**'. It might be tempting for schools to avoid reading this section, but please don't! Within the law, there are significant freedoms for schools, which need to be properly understood.



The last two bullet points are expanded on in the next section '**Interpreting the law**'. It might be tempting for schools to avoid reading this section, but please don't! Within the law, there are significant freedoms for schools, which need to be properly understood.

The law does not specify:

- timing and organisation of daily collective worship;
- the size and make-up of pupil groups (though Schedule 20 to the 1998 Act states that there might be "a single act of worship for all pupils or separate acts of worship for pupils in different age groups or in different school groups.")

During the pandemic of 2020-21, the DfE also confirmed that in the present circumstances, other groupings such as 'bubbles'/ 'pods' formed by schools to manage appropriate social distancing could also be included in this list. The DfE view is that this gives schools a lot of flexibility to conduct CW in any grouping that they think appropriate.

The responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the Headteacher, after consultation with the Governing Body.



In Church Schools (VA or VC) collective worship must be:

- daily for all registered pupils;
- organised to allow pupils to be withdrawn if parents have so requested;

- in accordance with the religious character of the school, as determined by the Governing Body and in line with its Trust Deed.

It is also good practice for acts of collective worship in Church Schools to be as inclusive as possible, to enable pupils of other faiths or who have non-religious beliefs to feel comfortable in being part of the collective worship. Church School collective worship is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 by Diocesan inspectors, under the SIAMS (*Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools*) inspection framework. Further guidance regarding the character and content of collective worship in Church Schools should be sought from the appropriate Diocesan authorities

Modifications to the law: 'Determinations'

Under Section 12 of the 1988 Education Reform Act and Schedule 20, para 4 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, local authority maintained schools may apply to their SACRE for a determination. A determination **does not remove the requirement for collective worship to take place**, but does permit schools to hold acts of collective worship that are distinctive of another faith, though not distinctive of any particular denomination.

A determination is effective for a maximum of five years, after which it lapses if it has not been renewed by SACRE following a new application. After consultation with parents and the governing body of their school, a Headteacher seeking a determination should complete the form 'Application for a determination', which is included in [Appendix C](#), along with details of the determination process. In the past, Surrey SACRE has granted a determination to a school in which a significant proportion of pupils were from the Muslim community. Their determination allowed them to hold acts of collective worship that better served the needs and of the pupils attending the school. This school is now an academy, and as such now falls outside of SACRE's remit for determinations. Academies and free schools that seek a determination should apply to the Education Funding Agency.

Interpreting the Law regarding Acts of Collective Worship



It may come as a surprise that the legal definition of collective worship is broad, and offers schools significant freedom of interpretation. Once the scope of the freedoms within the bounds of the law is understood, it should empower schools to deliver collective worship that is truly inspiring, creative, inclusive, participative, challenging, educational and appropriate for the whole school community (including staff), of all ages, from all faiths or beliefs, without any danger of indoctrinating anyone or compromising anyone's personal beliefs. Collective worship should be:

'...wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character...'

Firstly, collective worship can be '**wholly or mainly...**', therefore collective worship does not have to be **all** '*of a broadly Christian character*'. Indeed, the 1998 Act specifies that '*...not every act of collective worship in the school need comply....provided that, taking any school term as a whole, most such acts which take place in the school do comply*' and a letter from the Secretary of State for Education (November 1996) specified that '*any act of worship can contain non-Christian material*'. There is clearly opportunity here for variety and breadth, reflecting the religious and non-religious traditions of those who form a part of the school community. The only requirement is that over the course of a term, the majority (so 51% or more) of acts of worship should be 'broadly Christian'. This requirement is confirmed by the Department for Education in a [briefing paper](#) published in February 2020.

'...reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief...'

Secondly, collective worship must '*reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief*'; that is to say, it is broad rather than specific or exclusive, reflecting plurality and focusing, not on doctrine or traditions of worship, but on *belief* that is broadly Christian, but is not '*distinctive of any particular Christian denomination*.' Many schools now use a programme of values as inspiration for collective worship, many of which will have strong links to 'broadly Christian' beliefs, whilst also being shared by those from different belief traditions. (NB see also FAQ section)

'....an opportunity for pupils to worship....'

The key word here is '*opportunity*'. There is no compulsion to worship, and schools should make this clear to all who lead acts of collective worship. Worship is an open invitation, but it is for pupils – and staff – to use that opportunity if they feel comfortable doing so. For many, it is this element that makes collective worship more than an 'assembly', gives it its spiritual dimension and accords special status to this time in the school day. There is further thought on this issue in the next section and ['Encouraging reflection in Collective Worship'](#).

Collective worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

The overall purpose of the curriculum, as set out in the 1988 ERA, is to:

- a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society;
- b) prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

'This is a startlingly challenging duty placed on schools. Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, as it has become known, is about the nurture of them as human beings and, as such, is the most important job a school is charged with fulfilling. Doing the same **for society** is mind blowing. It is a shared responsibility involving the whole school and the whole curriculum.'

[Julie Grove, a former Chair of NASACRE]

The Department for Education recognised this in some small way with the Fundamental British Values agenda (more on the next page), as it outlined schools' role in developing responsible citizens of the future. Collective worship in schools could and **should** be a significant contributor to this overall curriculum aim, as well as specifically to pupils' SMSC development. Many of Ofsted's points of definition (outlined in the [Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, para 219-223](#)), have strong connections with collective worship, and SACRE recommends that schools make the most of the opportunities that collective worship provides for enriching pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and so meeting these Ofsted criteria. However, whilst collective worship is a significant contributor to all areas of pupils' SMSC development, it is perhaps spiritual development that schools and parents are most apprehensive about.

Ofsted states that provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life;
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values;
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them;
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning;
- willingness to reflect on their experiences.



The paper 'Collective Worship Revisited' helpfully explores the role of collective worship in nurturing pupils' spiritual development:

'Of the terms in use to describe these aspects of an individual's development, the word 'spiritual' causes the greatest unease in schools. Much misunderstood, it conjures up for many images of a variety of religious practice, giving the impression the word 'spirituality' is synonymous with religion. It is not. Religious faith is an expression of spirituality. In this educational context, spiritual development is used more broadly to describe nurturing the spiritual dimension of every human being, in recognition of the uniqueness of the individual and her or his humanity and potential. It is about helping pupils to develop the capacity to transcend the limitations of the physical world; to lift their horizons beyond the materialistic; to be creative; to consider ultimate questions about the meaning of life in general and their own lives in particular; to develop positive attitudes; to have hope. It goes further than what the child knows, understands and can do...to what the child is and is becoming.

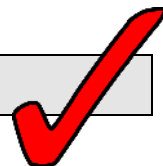
What is frequently not realised is what a golden opportunity for supporting this development can be found in collective worship. It can make values explicit for pupils, challenge their thinking, extend their emotional repertoire, help them to know and celebrate who they are and understand what the school community stands for and aspires to.'

Since February 2014, schools have also had a duty to promote [Fundamental British Values](#) through their SMSC provision. Much of what good schools already do in collective worship contributes to this agenda for schools, as it provides opportunities to:



- develop cohesion amongst the school community, helping to promote and strengthen every member's belonging and unique contribution to the school;
- celebrate being part of a school community;
- affirm the shared values of the school community;
- understand the place of rules in their school and wider community, as well as exploring the difference between right and wrong;
- broaden pupils' awareness of themselves, others and the world in which they live;
- explore areas which directly concern them, related to age, ability and experience;
- experience religious worship, including traditions different to their own;
- explore and question their own beliefs and values, alongside the beliefs and values of others;
- become reflective, deep thinking individuals in a busy, diverse and complex society;
- deepen understanding of their own cultures and beliefs and those of others, recognising that diversity is enriching rather than threatening.

What is good practice in Collective Worship?



Collective worship should:

- be well planned, recorded and evaluated (including gathering pupils' opinions);
- be accessible to the whole school community (pupils and adults), taking into account their ages, aptitudes and personal beliefs (whether known or not) whilst showing sensitivity to family backgrounds, including those with a faith, and those with non-religious beliefs;
- take place in an appropriate atmosphere which promotes attitudes of respect, awe and wonder, enquiry, self-understanding;
- encourage reflection;
- use a variety of resources and strategies to encourage and retain pupils' active involvement.

Included within this guidance is a set of self-evaluation statements to help schools to assess the quality of the collective worship that they provide. These can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Creating the right environment for collective worship is often worth more than a thousand words. An appropriate ethos for collective worship can be nurtured through some of the following:

- **Whole school involvement**

By staff choosing to be present and involved during the majority of acts of collective worship, signals are given to the pupils that this is a significant event in the life of the school community.

- **Pupil involvement**

Good collective worship encourages the involvement of pupils to plan and / or lead elements of the time together. In the same way that many pupils will be involved in school life through Pupil Voice / Parliament / School Council, this demonstrates that the school values their opinions, beliefs and views and is prepared to give them opportunities to develop leadership skills in this important area of school life.

- **Music**

Music can help give a sense of occasion and pitch the mood for the whole event. Using music from a variety of traditions and cultures also enhances collective worship.

- **Stories**

Using stories from faith communities, or stories with a moral message, brings cultural richness to Collective Worship. A range of storytelling techniques can be used, from 'all-together' stories where children join in the actions that accompany certain words, to reflective storytelling using objects. As with using prayers from different faiths, it's important to set religious stories in their context e.g. 'This is a story from the life of Jesus which is special to Christians. As you listen, think about how Jesus shows compassion.' or 'This is a Jewish story which is told at Sukkot, the time of Harvest.' or 'This is a moral story which shows the importance of listening.'

- **Symbols**

Many schools make a distinction between the notice-giving element of 'Assembly' and the act of collective worship. Some schools aid this transition by the lighting of a candle, the ringing of a bell, or using familiar phrases such as 'Now let's be quiet and still....' in order to indicate that collective worship is about to begin.

Collective worship should involve all pupils assembled – by involvement we mean that pupils should be absorbed in what is going on, rather than passive or distracted. So:

- keep collective worship brief and to the point;
- use a variety of techniques to keep pupil interest: read or tell a story, mime, dance, music, silence, pupil participation, video clip, PowerPoint etc.;
- use props or mimes to make a reading come alive – e.g. a letter, newspaper, flash-card, clothes, food etc.;
- use amplification if pupils find it difficult to make themselves heard whilst contributing from the front, helping them to speak clearly and with confidence;
- ensure a variety of styles or collective worship throughout the year.

There are some sample acts of worship within this guidance, (in [Appendix A](#)) showing how a theme introduced on a Monday might be developed during a week, and the theme contributes to pupils' SMSC development. There are 2 suggestions each for the Primary and Secondary phases.

Encouraging reflection in Collective Worship

When an Ofsted report comments on the need for a school to provide more opportunities for spiritual development, it often means that there were no opportunities for pupils to reflect upon what they have just seen and heard, including within collective worship. Some acts of collective worship observed by SACRE members in the past have been stimulating, inspiring and challenging but could have been even more effective if they had contained an opportunity for reflection. Time for reflection offers pupils a moment of stillness and quiet in a busy world and enables them to internalise the main ideas within collective worship.



Reflection can be encouraged by:

- asking pupils to listen quietly to a piece of music and consider what they have just heard;
- using phrases such as 'let us just sit quietly for a moment and think or pray about what we have just seen or heard' or 'let us close our eyes and open our hearts and minds';
- leading pupils through a time of guided reflection e.g. giving them ideas, names of people to think about etc.;
- lighting a candle and asking pupils to focus on the flickering flame;
- using pictures or images.

During reflection pupils are able to absorb and respond to the main ideas within collective worship at their own level. There is no compulsion to worship or act against their own consciences. This is often referred to as the 'threshold experience'. Moments of reflection may allow pupils to cross the threshold into worship – it is then up to each individual whether they pass beyond the threshold.

It may be that some pupils will want to follow up issues raised within collective worship. This may be on an individual basis or collectively.

Prayer in Collective Worship



The issue of prayer in collective worship is likely to be of particular concern to schools, where there may be a breadth of belief, and some where the majority of pupils and staff may not consider themselves to be practising members of a faith community. Prayer, as with worship and reflection, is an **opportunity** that's presented, not an expectation to be fulfilled. No-one attending an act of worship should feel compelled to pray; neither should anyone wishing to pray not be given an opportunity, even if that opportunity is only offered as a private response.

Any member of staff or outside visitor taking collective worship, irrespective of their personal faith stance, will need to consider whether any prayer they offer uses language and concepts which are accessible to the ages, aptitudes and sensitive to the family backgrounds of pupils. For example, Muslim pupils will have difficulties with prayers that address God as Father, as this goes against their fundamental belief in the Absolute One-ness of God. Also Muslim and Jewish pupils will have difficulties with prayers that describe Jesus as the Son of God, Christ, Lord etc. It should also be remembered that physical positions for praying that are specific to one faith may not be appropriate for pupils of another.

It's also very important to give pupils permission to not join in, especially where with younger children, their automatic response is often to do what their teachers are asking them to, even if it's not something they would be familiar with! Whilst being aware of children's family backgrounds, it is also possible that some pupils may wish to choose their own beliefs, that might be different from their family's, and these should also be respected.

Here are some suggested strategies:

- Some prayers can be inclusive to most religions by using phrases such as '*Dear God.....*'
- It is possible, within the legal framework of the ERAs, to include prayers from different religions and introduce them with phrases such as:
'Now we are going to listen to a famous Christian prayer called the Lord's Prayer which Jesus taught to his disciples' or '*Here is a well-known prayer used by Hindus*'.
- Using phrases such as:
 - '*I'm now going to put my thoughts into a prayer. If you like, you can make the prayer your own and join me at the end, by saying Amen.*'
 - '*Let us sit quietly and pray or think for a moment about what we have just seen and heard*'.
 - '*If this is something that you would be comfortable with, then join with me...*'
 - '*If this is something that you wouldn't usually do, then you might prefer to sit quietly...*'.
- Invite children or staff to read out their own favourite prayers or ones they have written for the occasion.

Music in Collective Worship



Music is a powerful medium for creating an atmosphere in collective worship. It can be used:

- at the beginning of collective worship as pupils are coming into the hall;
- as the main focal point of the act of collective worship, for example where pupils reflect upon the words of a song;
- as part of collective worship, with whole school singing;
- to mark the end of collective worship.

Many schools hold a 'singing practice' or 'singing assembly' during the week. For this to be an act of worship, pupils should also be given space to reflect (most usefully on the words of the songs being practised!) As with prayer, singing songs (especially those with 'religious' words) should be an invitation and not an expectation, and pupils should be given the freedom to sing, or not.

Some other considerations:

- Does the school use a variety of musical styles, ancient and modern, from different cultures, for pupils to listen to?
- Is music used to enhance moments of reflection?
- Are pupils able to participate in music, through singing or playing musical instruments?
- Are pupils encouraged to think about the lyrics of a song (and are those lyrics appropriate for the age and / or religious backgrounds of the pupils?)
- Is music an afterthought or is it planned to be integral to the whole act of collective worship?
- Is the school aware of copyright issues relating the use of music in schools?
- Are pupils given opportunities to contribute their own compositions to collective worship?

Visitors to Collective Worship



Visitors leading collective worship should be well-prepared and clear about the nature of collective worship within schools. Schools should pay particular attention to guidance issued by Ofsted regarding pupils' behaviour and safety i.e. that visitors to the school are suitable and checked and monitored as appropriate. Schools should have a clear set of guidelines on the use of external speakers and should explicitly notify parents in advance of any such speakers coming to the school to participate in acts of collective

worship. There is further guidance within SACRE's publication ['Encounters with Faith'](#).

Visitors will need to know about:

- the educational framework for collective worship: that it is not an opportunity for evangelism or indoctrination, and that school collective worship is very different from worship that they might be more familiar with from their own faith background;
- how the school introduces or sets the scene for the 'worship' elements of collective worship;
- any particular 'wording' that the school adopts for introducing prayers or songs to ensure that the collective worship is as inclusive as possible;
- the ages, aptitudes and religious backgrounds of the pupils, so that the language and content is appropriate;
- how this particular act of collective worship fits in with previous sessions;
- practical issues such as:
 - parking arrangements
 - the availability of equipment, such as IWB, sound system etc.
 - the size and make-up of group
 - the time allocation for session
 - whether the school requires visitors to be DBS checked

It is essential that visiting speakers receive a copy of the school policy on collective worship before their visit, and highly recommended that visitors meet with key members of staff before leading an act of worship, to establish school protocols.

Planning and recording Collective Worship

Although the idea of planning a two, three or four year rolling programme for collective worship might seem to be an insurmountable obstacle, it can be done fairly easily and can save a great deal of heartache for the future. Planning can also ensure that collective worship is an educational experience and brings together all aspects of the curriculum.

The planning templates included in [Appendix A](#) may be useful for devising a broad overview of collective worship within your school, or for adaption. It may be useful to use these for recording as well as planning in case the school needs evidence when faced with a parental complaint. Schools may also wish to take into account the religious calendar or other key world events e.g. Armistice Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, Interfaith week etc. when planning their assembly cycle. Schools will also need to be flexible and respond sensitively to current events in the news as they occur.

Some FAQs:



- ***How long should an act of collective worship be?***

There is no legislation on this and professional judgment is needed. Many acts of collective worship are too long and labored, which results in pupils becoming restless. An effective act of collective worship could be anything from 3-20 minutes long.

- ***Should all the teaching staff be present for collective worship?***

There is a tendency, especially in primary schools, to give teachers non-contact time during collective worship. Although this is understandable, it undermines the important aspect of collective worship as being a celebration of the whole school community. Pupils quickly realise when key adults are not present and begin to wonder whether collective worship is an important part of the school day.

SACRE's advice is that all staff who have not withdrawn from collective worship on grounds of conscience should be present for the majority of acts of collective worship.

- ***Does having a 'thought for the day' or reflection time with the class teacher or form tutor fulfill the legal requirements of daily collective worship?***

This very much depends upon the individual leading it. Inconsistency and lack of monitoring seems to be a key criticism of Ofsted on this area in the past. The success or failure of a class based collective worship depends upon whether or not each member of staff feels comfortable in leading an act of collective worship with their class, or whether pupils are able to take the lead with their teacher's supervision. Also does the event contain the necessary ingredients of collective worship and reflect the legal requirements of "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character"?

- ***Does collective worship have to be Christian worship?***

Since much of the documentation consistently avoids calling school worship 'Christian', it is clear that the Law is not intended to be interpreted as such. This being said, it is the advice of SACRE that if school worship consistently avoids reference to the person of Jesus within the spoken or written word then it could not reasonably be defined as 'mainly Christian'. An inclusive way of doing this might be to use stories from the life of Jesus as examples of

expressing, for example, compassion or friendship, allowing pupils opportunity to reflect on what Jesus said or did, within the context of the bigger theme.

- ***What should a school policy on collective worship contain?***

- A statement about what the school considers to be the aims of collective worship and good practice;
- A statement about right of withdrawal for pupils and teachers, and what the procedure in school is for so doing;
- A paragraph about the nature of the school population, whether or not pupils from different faiths are present and an indication of those pupils who withdraw from collective worship;
- A list of resources and where to find them;
- Planning and evaluation sheets.

- ***Where can I find collective worship resources?***

Although it is not SACRE's place to recommend specific resources for collective worship, and certainly not to endorse one resource over another, we recognise that for many schools, time is precious! As previously recommended, the wording used in any collective worship should be carefully considered, inclusive and invitational, and there is the risk with using a resource written by someone else that the language doesn't match what would be normal, or best practice, for individual schools. There is also the issue of the unpredictable nature of the internet, and resources being there one minute and gone the next. However, the suggestions below are a starting point for you:

www.assembliesforall.org.uk Ideal for inclusive assemblies, endorsed by Humanists UK, developed by over 50 organisations ranging from charities like Amnesty, Oxfam, and Unicef, to the UK Parliament and the BBC.

www.assemblies.org.uk Produced by SPCK (The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge)



BBC Schools Radio produce both complete assemblies for KS1 (Something to Think About) & KS2 (Together) which you can search from [here](#) and also have a considerable archive of stories for collective worship, accessible from [here](#). There is also an area where you can find [songs* for collective worship](#) produced by the BBC, and comprehensive [Teachers' Notes](#). (**Do check the words first!*)

There are also resources for collective worship produced by different charities e.g. Christian Aid, Oxfam, CAFOD etc. In addition, many Dioceses regularly produce materials for use in Church schools, so do visit their websites for materials that might be adapted for use in community schools. Although their status as Church schools does mean that the character of collective worship will be more focused on Christianity, church schools should still provide worship that is invitational and inclusive of those from other faiths or beliefs. Visit the Diocese of Guildford's website [here](#).



The Children's Music Network <https://childrensmusic.org/about> contains songs for the younger members of the school community, but suitable for all.

Out of the Ark also produce widely-used resources for music in collective worship, and for many other occasions! <https://www.outoftheark.co.uk/>



Time to Reflect:

Appendices



	<i>page</i>
<u>Appendix A: Sample acts of worship & planning templates</u>	18
<u>Appendix B: Self-evaluation grades for schools' collective worship</u>	26
<u>Appendix C: The determination process</u>	28
<u>Appendix D: Perspectives on worship from members of SACRE</u>	32

APPENDIX A SAMPLES: How might Collective Worship 'look'?

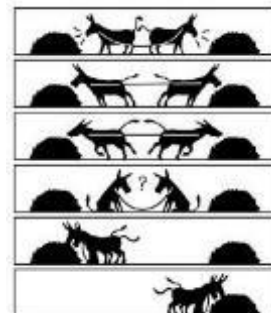
With many thanks to AREIAC for the examples in this section.

Primary Phase:

Example 1 – 'Working Together': potential contribution to pupils' SMSC development:

The theme 'Working Together' encourages primary children to:

- remember they do not live in isolation but that the human condition is shared;
- think of others before themselves; (*spiritual*)
- understand that they have a responsibility towards others;
- discuss ways in which they can promote the common good; (*moral*)
- consider their own behaviour towards other people;
- appreciate the benefits of co-operation;
- evaluate the impact of shared actions on world events; (*social*)
- understand that a 'culture' of co-operation is preferable to one of conflict;
- become aware of the damaging effect of one culture's supremacy over others. (*cultural*)



Age range: Primary
Theme: Working Together
Context: whole school
Resources: a copy of the picture 'Co-operation is better than conflict' from the Quaker website
Content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children gather to the strains of the song 'I'd like to teach the world to sing...' • The Head teacher engages children with the words, asking what they think the writer of the song hoped for and what the phrase 'perfect harmony' means. • She tells them she has something to show them and reveals the drawing of two struggling donkeys and invites them to talk about it in pairs... • She gathers their ideas and there is a discussion with the children about what the donkeys learned.
Words for worship: (<i>including prayer, where appropriate</i>) 'Perhaps you would like to be very quiet for a moment and think about a time when you've been like one of those donkeys – when you've worked against someone to get your own way; we all behave like that sometimes. Think about what you could have done in that situation and, if you want to, you can say your own prayer, asking God to help you to be less selfish.'
Song for the week: e.g: 'A Better World' No 60 in Gadsby & Hoggarth, Alleluya A & C Black ISBN 0-7136-1997-X

And for the rest of the week:

Context: a mixture of whole school, classrooms and key stage groups

Tuesday (in classrooms): How can we work together? Story of the hungry stomach; Being like a body (I Corinthians 12);

Wednesday (in key stage groups): Becoming strong together demonstrating with attempts to tear a telephone directory and telling the traditional Jataka story of the birds (Buddhist);

Thursday (in classrooms): When working together made a difference: the story of Rosa Parks and the bus boycott in Atlanta;

Friday (whole school): Making a difference now: the Jubilee 'Drop the Debt' campaign and world leaders' summit.

Example 2 – 'Threads': potential contribution to pupils' SMSC development:



The theme 'Threads' encourages children to:

- explore various 'threads' as metaphors for relationships;
- understand that they are joined by many threads;
- reflect on the strength of the invisible threads that help to make them who they are;
- think about those people they love, including any who have died (if appropriate); (*spiritual*)
- remember it is good to think of others and to want to be friendly;
- challenge their thinking about friendship and what it means; (*moral*)
- understand that relationships bind people together;
- appreciate relational 'threads' across generations;
- recognise that everyone in the school belongs together; (*social*)
- appreciate how 'threads' help to cross boundaries of time and culture. (*cultural*)

	Activity:	Focus:	Words for worship:
Monday: whole school	Pass a strong thread through the hands of everyone in the hall, encouraging quiet concentration on the thread itself. Allow time for this activity while listening to (or singing) an appropriate song about being a community. Talk about what the thread symbolises and how it feels to be joined by it. Invite children to suggest other ways in which they are 'joined' together in school.	Threads of community	<i>Look at the thread in your hands, joining you to everyone else here; think quietly about the words of the song and the invisible threads that bind us all together.</i>
Tuesday: classrooms	Tell the story of a little girl who helps her grandmother to make a quilt. (eg: Flourney V. The Patchwork Quilt Picture Puffins ISBN 0 14 050641 1) Draw out ideas about the threads of a person's history through memory and tradition.	Threads through my history	<i>I'd like to invite you to think back as far as you can. Think of someone you love who joins you to the past. If you would like to, say thank you to God for all these memories and the person who helped to create them.</i>
Wednesday: KS groups	Talk about how we want to remember people we love who have died. Use a story of loss to talk about the joy of memory as a link to the past (e.g. Varley S. Badger's Parting Gift Harper Collins, ISBN: 0-688-11518-7) or introduce the idea of a quilt to help remembering: (http://www.lynnsettington.co.uk/world-aids-day-quilt)	Threads of loving	<i>Adam has a prayer to share with us this morning; let's be quiet and listen: 'Please God, look after my Grandad who has just died and my Nana who is sad. Amen.'</i>
Thursday: classrooms	Talk about friendship bands and why they are given and worn. Set up an activity in which every pupil makes a simple band, either of thread or card. Invite children to sit in a friendship circle and put their band onto the wrist of the person next to them, saying the words for worship.	Threads of friendship	<i>This is to help you remember I want to be your friend. Help me to be your friend.</i>
Friday: whole school	Remind everyone of the thread that joined them all together on Monday. Talk about the idea of a sacred thread, joining the person to God and show pictures of Hindus wearing their sacred threads across the chest. Explain how they are made and invite pupils to think about the three strands of their lives that they would want to plait together if they had such a thread.	Sacred threads	<i>A famous priest, John Henry Newman said, 'I am a link in a chain, a bond of connections between persons'. Think about how you are a link in a chain. If you want to, you can think about the threads that join you to God.</i>

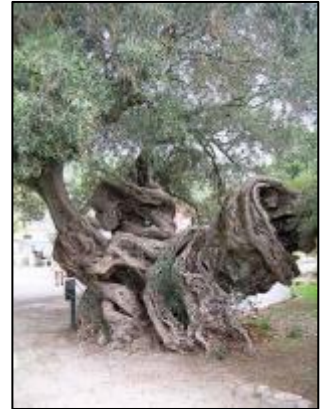
Secondary Phase:

Example 1 – 'Planting for the future': potential contribution to pupils' SMSC development:

Context: year group gathering once a week and tutor group collective worship on all other days;

The theme '*Planting for the Future*' encourages secondary pupils to:

- contemplate their own sense of transience in a fleeting world; (*spiritual*)
- reflect on the responsibilities they have as trustees of the future; (*moral*)
- develop a critique of modern society's reliance on instant gratification; (*social*)
- appreciate there is more to life than money;
- appreciate that both individual and collective responses to issues of culture evolve and change and are often in tension. (*cultural*)



Photograph of an old olive tree used as focus for each day

Monday: Planting for the future; origins of the Jewish festival of trees, Tu B'Shevat;
What do you 'plant' for the future?

Tuesday: A Personal Memory: The National Trust, founded in 1895 with its oak leaf symbol;
Is the past as important as the future? Why?
Why are symbols like the leaf important? What do they signify?

Wednesday: A Fruitful World: Talmud story of the Rabbi and the old man, planting a fruit tree, even though he would never taste its fruit; How good are you at waiting? What is the best way of thanking the people of the past whom you will never meet?

Thursday: Here today, gone tomorrow; if the world were to end tomorrow, what would you do today? Thinking about being responsible to and for others; focusing on ways to serve.

Friday: A Legacy: what is the greatest gift you've been given? What makes life worth living? What would you like to give to the world for the future? If the world were to end tomorrow, what would you do today? Pupils invited to write their ideas on a leaf shape and pin on a tree image.

Words for worship (used every day):

A famous Christian hymn writer, Fred Kaan, asks this question in one of his hymns:

*'...Were the world to end tomorrow
Would we plant a tree today?'*

In a moment of silence, think about your response to those words.

Example 2 – 'Do unto others....': potential contribution to pupils' SMSC development:

Context: year group gathering once a week and tutor group collective worship on all other days;



The theme '*Do unto others...*' encourages secondary pupils to:

- appreciate the universal nature of some religious teaching;
- see the potential benefit of compassion;
- find wisdom in very ordinary ideas;
- imagine they could change the world for the better; (*spiritual*)
- contemplate the implications and benefits of putting others first;
- challenge their own treatment of people they do not know or like; (*moral*)
- think critically about their relationships with others;
- realise the importance of empathising with others; (*social*)
- understand that some teaching crosses religious and cultural boundaries. (*cultural*)

	Material:	Questions:	Words for worship:
Monday One legged wisdom	A famous Jewish teacher called Rabbi Hillel was once challenged by someone to sum up the whole of Jewish teaching as set out in the Torah. And to do so while standing on one leg! He replied, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation. Go and learn". These ancient words have become known as The Golden Rule and they are found in the sacred writings of most religions, and in non-religious communities.	What would your golden rule be? Why are some words so long remembered?	<i>Rabbi Hillel also said, "If I am only for myself, what am I?" Stop and ask yourself, If a person is only for her or himself, what is that person doing with life?"</i>
Tuesday Wesak	For many Buddhists, Wesak is the most important festival of the year. It is the time when they celebrate the life of the Buddha who rejected his wealthy lifestyle to search for the truth about big questions like suffering. When he found his answers he became enlightened. Buddha taught that being kind and generous to others is important; it is good to give hospitality to anyone, whoever they are.	Whose teaching do you follow? Where do you find answers to really big questions?	<i>'A generous heart, kind speech and compassion are the things which renew humanity.'</i> <i>Saying of the Buddha</i>
Weds Loving the enemy	The Guru led a strong army in battle and when the fighting was over, there were many dead and injured on the battlefield. The Guru sent a group of his men out to tend the injured. As he watched, he saw Bhai Ghanaya, a water carrier, tending enemy soldiers as well as his own. He summoned him and demanded to know what he was doing. Bhai Ghanaya answered, "Master, when I gave out water I did not see friends or enemies. I saw only the wounded." The Guru was deeply moved by these words and told him he was indeed a true Sikh.	What does this story tell you about what a 'true Sikh' might be?	<i>One potter has fashioned all the pots. One light pervades all creation.'</i> <i>Guru Granth Sahib</i>
Thursday Love one another	On the night before he was killed, Jesus had a farewell meal with his friends. He showed them how they were to remember him and gave them new rules for living. "A new commandment I give to you," he said to them, "that you love one another as I have loved you." To show what he meant, Jesus had already washed their feet like a servant. They did not understand but they realised something was going to change. "By this, he went on, "people will know you are my disciples." And that would be important one day...	How do people know who you are? How would you like to be remembered?	<i>Jesus taught, "Love one another as I have loved you..."</i>
Friday Wisdom for the world	The first person to formulate what we call the Golden Rule was probably the Chinese sage Confucius, 2500 years ago. When asked what his followers should practise he gave them the instruction: 'Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.' This idea, more often a positive statement, is at the heart of all these religious stories. It is wisdom that has survived the centuries and it is the essence of compassion. It is not exclusively a religious idea however. It is shared by many people all over the world. Just think how wonderful it would be if absolutely everyone were really compassionate...	What could you learn about yourself from these religious stories? How could you change the world?	<i>Always do to others as you would like them to do to you...</i> <i>Be quiet for a moment and think what those words mean to you. You can make your thoughts into a prayer if you want to.</i>

LONG TERM PLAN

Rolling Programme for Collective Worship			Year		
Autumn		Spring		Summer	
Main Theme:		Main Theme:		Main Theme:	
1.		1.		1.	
2.		2.		2.	
3.		3.		3.	
4.		4.		4.	
5.		5.		5.	
6.		6.		6.	
Main Theme:		Main Theme:		Main Theme:	
1.		1.		1.	
2.		2.		2.	
3.		3.		3.	
4.		4.		4.	
5.		5.		5.	
6.		6.		6.	

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP: WEEKLY PLANNING AND RECORD SHEET

Date	Led by	Focus/Theme	Method/ Means	Pupil Participation	Prayer/ Reflection / 'Words for worship'	Song/Music	Other Information	Comment/ Evaluation
Monday								
Tuesday								
Wednesday								
Thursday								
Friday								

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP: PLANNING/MONITORING SHEET

Theme for Week:

Week Commencing:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Pupil Groups					
Location					
Time					
Led by:					
Theme/Focus					
Content/delivery method					
Resources					
Equipment					
Music					
Prayer/Reflection / 'Words for worship'					
Comment/Evaluation					

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP: DAILY PLANNING RECORD SHEET

DATE:	DURATION:
TAKEN BY:	
YEAR GROUP(S):	
THEME:	
RESOURCES/VISITORS:	
PRAYER / REFLECTION / 'WORDS FOR WORSHIP':	
SONG:	MUSIC:
COMMENTS/EVALUATION:	

APPENDIX B: Grades for use in schools' self-evaluation of their collective worship

With thanks to Newham SACRE for their version, which we have adapted!

Outstanding:

- Themes give precise and highly appropriate opportunities to raise aspirations, inspire a high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural reflection and challenge pupils to take responsibility for their own conduct and charitable social actions.
- The ethos of the school demonstrates that collective worship is an essential part of school community life and values reflection or prayer as part of pupils' own spiritual and moral journey. This is evident in that many seek out opportunities for reflection or prayer in their own lives.
- The frequent inclusion of and reference to resources and exemplars with moral values in collective worship allows pupils to relate to and reflect upon the school's core values and application to their own lives.
- Different religious and non-religious traditions are widely explored and compared, offering pupils a rich experience of collective worship.
- Collective worship is an inclusive experience for pupils.
- Pupils are engaged with collective worship, regularly make imaginative and creative contributions and are able to take responsibility for particular aspects independently.
- Monitoring and evaluation have a clear purpose and are managed efficiently.
- Feedback gathered from a range of stakeholders provides insight into how worship influences the life of the community and leads directly to significant ongoing improvement of collective worship.

Good:

- Themes are relevant and pay close attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, providing clear guidance for pupils to take responsibility for their conduct and social actions.
- The ethos of the school demonstrates that collective worship is an important part of school community life and helps pupils to recognise and articulate the purpose of reflection or prayer, with some making use of prayer or reflection in their own lives.
- Collective worship often includes resources and references with moral values and pupils are able to make clear links between these and the school's core values.
- Different religious and non-religious traditions are explored and their impact on individuals' development is evident in their responses to collective worship.
- Collective worship is an inclusive experience for pupils.
- Most pupils are engaged with collective worship, enjoy contributing and increasingly take responsibility for particular aspects.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation identifies well where improvement is needed and clearly informs development planning.
- Stakeholders are consulted and their contributions and feedback are well used to inform the development of collective worship.

Requires improvement:

- Themes support the school's core values and some consideration is given to the coherent development of themes. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development may take place, but is limited where planning is inconsistent or lacks focus.
- Pupils experience opportunities for reflection or prayer but not enough opportunities are available to describe or evaluate its value and relevance to everyday life.
- Collective worship sometimes uses stories with morals but the relation to pupils' lives and the school's core values is not always explicit.
- Different religious and non-religious traditions are acknowledged and may be explored, but this lacks depth and rigour in some cases.
- Collective worship is not always an inclusive experience for all pupils.
- Pupils behave well when taking part in collective worship, are attentive and respond to the different elements. However, they are often passive and do not yet take responsibility for aspects of worship.
- Some feedback about collective worship is gathered, which prompts small changes to the arrangements, although there is limited analysis of its impact on the school community.

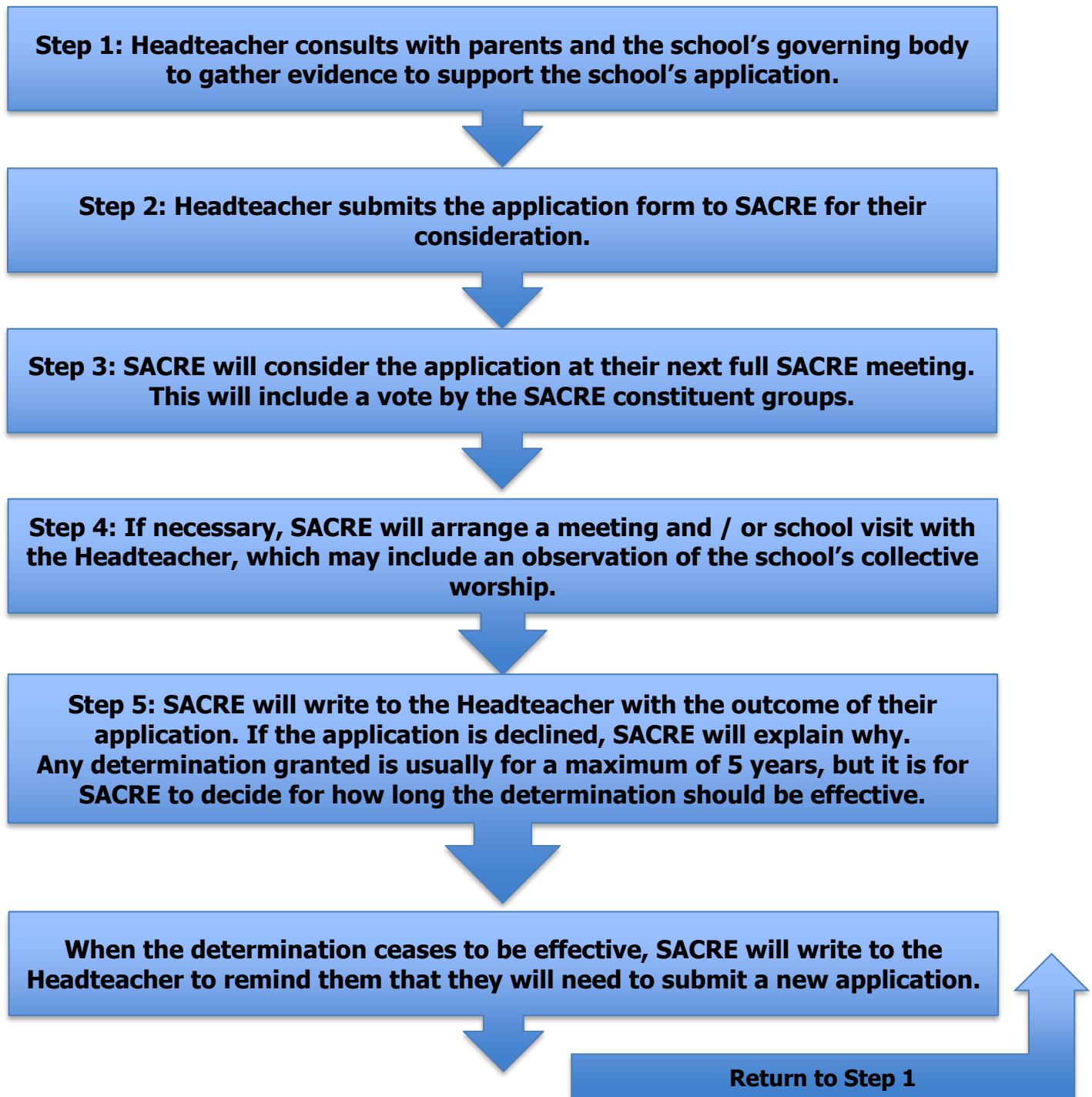
Inadequate:

- Themes are not sufficiently well planned and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is lacking or missing.
- There is little to raise pupils' spiritual awareness or directly to inspire them in the service of others. Reflection or prayer play a limited role in the pattern of school life, so pupils derive little spiritual benefit.
- Collective worship inconsistently uses resources with morals and the relation to pupils' lives and the school's core values are not always explicit enough.
- Pupils have limited awareness of different religious and non-religious traditions and gain little understanding of how to apply these to their own lives.
- Collective worship is often an experience which leaves some pupils feeling excluded and disrespected.
- Pupils are frequently not given opportunities to engage fully in collective worship.
- Little monitoring and evaluation of collective worship occurs and no account is taken of pupils' views. There is insufficient impact on improvement.

APPENDIX C: The Determination Process

Under Section 12 of the 1988 Education Reform Act and Schedule 20, para 4 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, local authority maintained schools may apply to their SACRE for a determination. A determination **does not remove the requirement for collective worship to take place**, but does permit schools to hold acts of collective worship that are distinctive of another faith, though not distinctive of any particular denomination.

A determination is effective for a maximum of five years, after which it lapses if it has not been renewed by SACRE following a new application.



SURREY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE)

APPLICATION FOR A DETERMINATION ON COLLECTIVE WORSHIP



The governing body of a school seeking a determination under section 12 of the Education Reform Act, 1988 is required to complete this form and send it to the Clerk to the SACRE. As part of this process, the LA Adviser will usually arrange a visit to the school to observe an act of collective worship. The Headteacher and Chair of governors must also attend a SACRE meeting to put forward their case. The SACRE will then consider the application and contact the school regarding the decision on the determination.

1. Name and Address of School

DfE no:

2. Age range of school

3. Number on roll

3. Data related to religious and belief diversity in the school (e.g. number of pupils of each faith or belief as given on school application forms)

<i>Religion or belief</i>	<i>Number of pupils</i>	<i>% pupils</i>
Bahá'í		
Buddhist		
Christian		
Hindu (Sanatana) Dharma		
Jewish		
Muslim		
Sikh		
Humanist		
No religious affiliation		
Not known		
Others (specify if known)		

4. Current situation:

- Is this application a continuation of present practice? yes / no
- Current number of pupils withdrawn from collective worship:
- Family religious or belief backgrounds of withdrawn pupils:

d. What currently happens to pupils who are withdrawn?

5. Is this determination being sought for:

- All pupils or **some** pupils?
- If **some**, actual number of pupils for whom alternative worship is being requested:
If **some**, actual percentage of pupils for whom alternative worship is being requested:
Does this group include pupils already referred to in Q.4? If 'yes' please provide details:

%

6. Why are you applying for this determination?

You will need to include an explanation of why collective worship that is 'broadly Christian' is inappropriate in respect of the religious or belief backgrounds of the pupils for whom alternative worship is being sought. If there is insufficient space below, please attach further information.

7. Date on which the Governing Body was consulted on this application

(Please enclose a copy of the relevant extract from the Governing Body's minutes with this application)

8. Who else has been consulted?

(Please attach documentation providing evidence of the consultation process e.g. relevant extracts from staff meeting or school council minutes; letters to parents, summary of parental responses etc.)

parents teachers pupils faith / belief communities others

9. What will be the religious / belief character of the alternative acts of worship?

10. What practical arrangements do you plan to make? (e.g. timing, location, who will organise and lead it?)

11. If there are any children not covered by the application, what arrangements do you plan to make for them?

12. Is there any other information you would like the SACRE to take into account?

This application is submitted by (Headteacher) Date:

This application is supported by (Chair of Governors) Date:

Please return this form by [date] to the SACRE adviser, via email
rachel.boxer@cofeguildford.org.uk

For SACRE use:

Determination granted: Yes / No

Date of decision:

APPENDIX D: Perspectives on Worship

With many thanks to SACRE faith and belief members for articles in this section

The articles in this section have been written by some SACRE faith and belief members, as we felt that it might be helpful for schools to read about worship through their eyes – firstly, to further appreciate the differences between corporate worship in faith communities and collective worship for schools; secondly, to help schools better understand what worship might mean for pupils from within those faith communities and what they might bring to school collective worship and lastly some thoughts from the perspective of someone who is non-religious.

<u>An Anglican view of worship:</u> <i>Jane Whittington (CofE member)</i>	p.32-33
<u>A Baptist view of worship:</u> <i>Rosslyn Doney (Baptist member)</i>	p.33-34
<u>A Methodist view of worship:</u> <i>Rev Allan Taylor (Methodist member)</i>	p.34
<u>Worship in the Bahá'í Faith:</u> <i>Nabil Mustapha (Bahá'í member)</i>	p.35
<u>Hindu worship:</u> <i>Raju Pandyr (Hindu member)</i>	p.36
<u>Jewish worship:</u> <i>Sarah Harris (Jewish member)</i>	p.36-37
<u>Muslim worship:</u> <i>Kauser Akhtar (Muslim member)</i>	p.38-39
<u>Sikh worship:</u> <i>Inderjeet Singh Rehncy (Sikh member)</i>	p.39
<u>A non-religious perspective:</u> <i>Jennie Johnson (Humanist member)</i>	p.40-41

An Anglican View of Worship



Worship lies at the heart of the Christian life. It is in worship that we express our theology and define our identity. It is through encountering God within worship that we are formed (and transformed) as his people. Christians worship the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; Christian worship is Trinitarian. God 'in three persons' is active, with us in our worship, but is also the object of that worship. Our songs, prayers, stories and responses are to be infused with 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.

Christians regard worship as something that they don't only do for God, but that God, through Jesus' example and the presence of the Holy Spirit is also at work in. Worship does not have to be corporate; individuals may

worship God at any time and in any place.

Liturgy refers to the patterns, forms, words and actions through which public worship is conducted.

Anglican worship places emphasis on Scriptures, on liturgy and on Church tradition. The liturgy includes creeds and statements of belief. However, there are a great variety of styles in Anglican worship. Some will use liturgy with the congregation making formal responses and music provided by a choir with the congregation joining in with some hymns. Others will be less formal with extemporised prayer and the congregation involved in singing modern hymns and songs. Not all worship will include music, however all will include Bible reading and prayer.

Worship in Church of England Schools

In Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, the daily act of collective worship must always be held according to the stipulations of the Trust Deed. That is, they are always of a broadly Christian nature. This is the original legal basis on which the school was founded. The stipulations are now enshrined in the school ethos statement, which is in turn included in the Instrument of Government.

This means that in Church of England schools school worship will be consistent with the faith and practice of the Anglican Church.

In Guildford Diocese many of our schools have adopted the following wording for their ethos statements:

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

The school aims to serve its community by providing 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 all its pupils.

The school holds an act of Christian Collective Worship each day for all students; this is marked by the use of symbols, themes, music and reflection. It is not confused with an administrative 'assembly' majoring on school notices. The daily act of worship has to be a distinctive act and cannot be subsumed in other activities of lessons.

The Church of England Education Office sets out in the SIAMS schedule* that collective worship in church schools should be invitational, inclusive and inspirational.

- **Invitational:** Everyone is welcome to take part in collective worship, as much or as little as they or their parents and carers are comfortable with. The leader will use invitational language and consider carefully their choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. The leader will invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

- **Inclusive:** Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, schools will choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When the leader presents Christian teaching, they make it clear that this is 'what Christians believe', saying things like: 'I wonder why this story might be important to Christians?' 'The story today comes from the Bible (the holy book of Christians), which teaches that...' Our worship should be accessible for children and young people with a range of different backgrounds, and so the school will offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.
- **Inspirational:** The leaders aim for acts of worship to inspire those engaging with them. How might it engage their emotions, enabling a sense of peace, comfort, hope or motivation? How might it inspire them into action, into thinking differently and considering their behaviour or actions? How might it inspire them to reflect on their faith or beliefs, and on the faith or beliefs of others?

The distinction has helpfully already been made elsewhere in this document between 'collective worship' and 'corporate worship'. Corporate worship, based on the word 'corpus' = body, is only possible for a body of believers. Collective worship acknowledges that we are not a 'body of believers' but a collection of individuals. Even in a Church school, where the context and object of our worship is Christian, we still engage in collective, rather than corporate worship.

In VA schools, teachers are generally required to take part in collective worship. However, at the discretion of the Headteacher and governing body teachers may request permission to withdraw from worship.

In Church of England schools (VC & VA) it is the governors who hold overall responsibility for ensuring that the law is kept. In practice it is usually the Headteacher and staff who plan the daily acts of worship, often in association with the incumbent and governors, but the governors hold the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the law is kept.

**SIAMS is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools, also known as a Section 48 Inspection*



Worship in the Baptist denomination

The 'Baptist' denomination is a group of Christian churches. Some belong to The Baptist Union and some are independent. The main beliefs in the Trinity, the Bible and Jesus being God's son and coming to earth, dying and raising again are the same as the Church of England. One of the important practices of the Baptist church is baptising by immersing people completely in water. This is the same as Jesus' baptism recorded in the Bible. The person being baptised makes promises in front of all the people saying they are sorry for the way they have done wrong things, saying thank you to Jesus for loving them and dying for them, and that they want to follow Jesus and live the way He taught in the Bible. This is based on the individual's own decision usually made when they are a teenager or older.

For a Christian in this denomination, worship means giving 'worth' to God or saying 'you are awesome'. To do this people might come together to sing songs about God and how they feel towards Him, read the Bible and learn about Him or speak or listen in prayer. Sometimes there are times to reflect and think quietly about God and the beautiful world around us. A minister or pastor usually leads this from the front.



They might also consider living their life in a way they believe God would want them to and how Jesus taught, as recorded in the Bible. Jesus taught that Christians should love others and treat others as they would want to be treated. This is all part of 'worship'.

On a Sunday, people come together to worship in the church. It is important for the community or 'family of the church'

to come together to sing, pray, read the Bible, learn and socialise together. The members want to support each other and be friends. Sometimes children have a special time to 'worship' with activities, Bible stories and fun songs. People can also worship God on their own or with a small group anywhere and at any time. They want to do this both individually and together with other Christians because God is important to them.

Sometimes people come into the church on a Sunday and join in without being a Christian themselves. Any one is welcome to come and be part of the collective meeting. They don't have to sing, pray or say anything.

Baptist churches believe they should use the early church as a model of how to 'worship' and be a 'church'. This model can be found in the book of Acts in the Bible.



Methodist Worship and Liturgy



Methodism was endowed by John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, with worship characterised by a twofold practice: the ritual liturgy of the *Book of Common Prayer* on the one hand and the informal preaching service on the other.

This twofold practice became distinctive of Methodism because worship in the Church of England was based, by law, solely on the *Book of Common Prayer* and worship in the Non-conformist churches was almost exclusively that of "services of the word", i.e. preaching services, with *Holy Communion* being observed infrequently. John Wesley's influence meant that, in Methodism, the two practices were combined, a situation which remains characteristic of the movement.

The British Methodist Church makes use of the *Methodist Worship Book* (similar to the Church of England's *Common Worship*), containing worship services (liturgies) and rubrics for the celebration of other rites, such as marriage.

A second distinctive liturgical feature of Methodism is the use of Covenant Services. Although practice varies between different national churches, most Methodist churches annually follow the call of John Wesley for a renewal of their covenant with God. It is common, at least in British Methodism, for each congregation to normally hold an annual Covenant Service on the first convenient Sunday of the year, and Wesley's Covenant Prayer is still used, with minor modification, in the order of service:

'Christ has many services to be done. Some are easy, others are difficult. Some bring honour, others bring reproach. Some are suitable to our natural inclinations and temporal interests, others are contrary to both.... Yet the power to do all these things is given to us in Christ, who strengthens us. ...I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.'



world.

Finally, Methodism was born in song. It is no accident that the current Methodist collection of hymns is called 'Singing the Faith' - proclaiming and understanding what they believe through heartfelt singing has been a marker of Methodists since the beginning. Early Methodists were taught their theology by the beautiful poetry in hymn writing of Charles Wesley.

* The photo (left) shows Wesley's Chapel, London...the Mother Church for Methodists throughout the

There are Methodist schools in the UK, just as there are Anglican schools: they share the same inspection process (SIAMS). Methodist schools aim:

- to worship as Christians in the Methodist tradition; to uphold Christian values in practice as well as in theory and to make religious education a strong feature of the curriculum, whilst welcoming members of other faiths (and none) in a spirit of openness and tolerance;
- to encourage pupils in a critical examination of the standards and values current in society and to discover and develop a personal faith to guide them throughout their lives.

*Group of Bahá'ís
of all ages and
"colour"*



Worship in the Bahá'í Faith



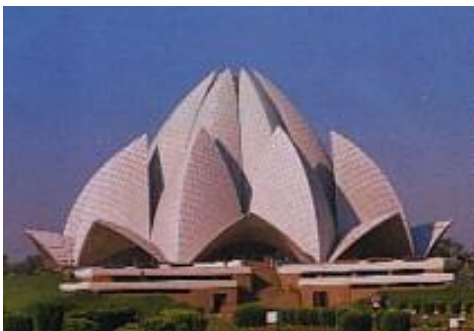
Bahá'ís worship God through prayer and meditation, by participating in devotional gatherings, and through active service to their communities. They individually recite one of three obligatory prayers each day as prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh. The Bahá'í scriptures offer much guidance on the uses of prayer and contain many prayers for various purposes and occasions. Moreover, work performed in the spirit of service is, according to the Bahá'í teachings, a form of worshipping God.

The Bahá'í Religion has no clergy. There are no rituals or prescribed forms of worship such as a church mass or a Friday prayer. Scriptures are read by individuals, either spontaneously or, in some organised events, through a programme for the event. Anyone present can take part, and non-Bahá'ís are welcome to participate if they so wish. Readings may be spaced by short periods of meditation, but again, there is no set form.



*Baha'is in prayer
at a private home*

Examples of Bahá'í Houses of Worship



New Delhi, India



Wilmette, Illinois, USA



Sydney, Australia

There are Bahá'í "Houses of Worship" in every continent. These are open to anyone at any time, and provided they are respectful and meditative, they can read from their own scriptures. Some events are organised periodically, but again, these are open to anyone, Bahá'í or non-Bahá'í.

Baha'i Houses of Worship are open to all peoples. Although their architectural styles differ widely, the nine sides and central dome common to all of them symbolize at once the diversity of the human race and its essential oneness. Devotional programmes are simple, consisting of prayers, meditations, and the reading of selections from the sacred scriptures of the Bahá'í Faith and other world religions. Music is provided by unaccompanied choirs.

As conceived by Bahá'u'lláh, the House of Worship is intended as the spiritual centre for various dependent institutions dedicated to scientific, humanitarian, educational and administrative service.

Hindu worship

Worship for a Hindu is centred around the sacred ceremony of puja, which is the same both at home and in the temple.



Puja, in twelve steps

You will need:

Murti (idol)
Cotton wick
Ghee (clarified butter) & box of matches
Incense sticks
Some rice
Vermillion
Two small brass pots
Copper pot (kalash)
Water
Flowers
Tray
A bell



1. Perform puja in the morning before having a meal.
2. Bathe and put on clean fresh clothes before puja.
3. Place copper pot and flower petals into the tray.
4. Put vermilion into one small pot & rice into the other one.
5. Light the cotton wick dipped in ghee in front of murti.
6. Light an incense stick and place it in a holder.
7. Fill the copper pot with clean water.
8. Put a few drops of water in the vermilion pot to make a paste.
9. Place a small red dot of vermilion & some grains of rice on the murti's forehead.
10. Say a prayer, followed by singing and ringing the bell.
11. Offer flower petals to the murti's feet.
12. Offer the lamp to the murti in a circular clockwise motion.

To see this in action, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbxlh8oRNWU&index=2&list=PL7B458BA0528BE7AC>



Jewish Worship



A Jew's life is a religious ceremony in itself, living according to the code of conduct, carrying out the mitzvot (commandments) are all a form of worship all to honour the Creator. Many Jews will practice at least some worship at home; often it will be lighting candles on Friday Night and welcoming the Sabbath. From the moment of waking there are blessings that can be said for every occasion, some

mundane like washing your hands, some celebratory like seeing a rainbow, everything in life therefore should have heightened value. The opening words are 'Blessed are you Lord our God who created' or 'who commanded us to.'

Religious Jews believe they are created in God's image therefore for all of them there is an imperative to act as God expects, loving God and valuing others, in the Orthodox tradition, there is also an emphasis on the correct prayers and ritual alongside this; Reform and Liberal Jews have a less formal approach to personnel prayer but are still guided by tradition.

Synagogue Worship

We do not know exactly how long Jews have been meeting together in synagogues to pray but it may be as long as 2,500 years; certainly public prayer came later than private prayer as there are many instances of people praying privately in the Bible.

In the U.K. Jews will talk about going to shule (Yiddish) or synagogue in the USA they refer to the 'temple', in Hebrew the synagogue can be 'Beit T'filah – House of Prayer, Beit Midrash – House of study or Beit Ha –Knesset – House of Meeting, and the synagogue fulfils all these functions. Essentially Jews can pray in any place and as a community anywhere there is a minyan and a Torah scroll.

It is meritorious to run to synagogue and equally meritorious to leave slowly, and also to pray regularly with the same congregation.

The Rabbis emphasise the importance of praying in a group, or minyan, traditionally ten men but including women in progressive synagogues. This is because together we can concentrate and create an atmosphere of prayer. Another feature of Jewish prayer is that during communal prayer we use the plural 'we' not 'I', - 'Grant us long life and strength..'

During the Sabbath and Festival morning Services a prayer is always said for the Queen and the Royal family and the safety and good governance of the Country.

The oldest prayer said by all the congregation is the Shema, which can be found in the Torah, it is also recited at critical moments in life and just before death.

The most sacred prayers can only be said if there is a minyan present and this includes the mourner's prayer 'kaddish'. This adds to the importance of members of the community being present to pray together and to be a support.

The Purpose of Prayer

This is very complex, however the standard answer cited by Rabbi Louis Jacobs, is that god cannot be seen to be arbitrarily granting us favours because we coax him. Rather it is his will that we turn to him and direct our needs to his will. If for instance, we pray for wealth, is it for our own selfish satisfaction or to help others? Similarly, if we ask God for knowledge, it is absurd if we do not try to acquire knowledge ourselves. Thus, prayers are an opportunity for us to be honest about ourselves in God's presence. Then God can grant our request because we, not God, have changed.

When we pray to praise God this fulfils our need to worship rather than his to be praised; importantly we praise God for his compassion, love of justice, and holiness. As we believe we are created in God's image, we are reminding ourselves these are the qualities we need to have if we are to be at one with God.

How Jews Pray

Prayers are said in completely in Hebrew in Orthodox communities and in the progressive, with differing amounts of English. The congregation stand for the key prayers or sit, they do not put their hands together or (except briefly on the Day of Atonement) kneel. For most prayers, the congregation faces East.

Generally men wear small skull caps: some women also cover their heads, and men wear a prayer shawl called a tallit (a few women do too). In orthodox synagogues men and women sit separately.

Services are led by the rabbi, sometimes with a cantor. The rabbi is not a priest (there are no sacraments), but a teacher and a preacher.

The prayer book is called a siddur which literally means 'order', the actual prayers are the same or very similar in every community, but the way that praying takes place varies. In orthodox communities the men sway as they are praying; this is more unusual in progressive communities.

The focus of the morning Sabbath and festivals is the reading from the Torah. The scrolls are processed around the synagogue (in most communities); this is not worship of the scroll but respect for the word of God. It is very important that the Torah is read without a mistake.

What always strikes people when they come into most synagogues is that there is always bustle and even talking; in fact the more orthodox a community, the more relaxed it appears: friends welcome each other, cuddle babies and even disagree with the rabbi. This is not because Jews do not care! As one rabbi said, 'For many Jews the Synagogue is an extension of home and who sits rigidly at home?'



Muslim Worship

The concept of worship in Islam is all-encompassing and incorporates ritual worship as well as common daily tasks.

Foundations of Worship



In Islam, worship is the very purpose of our existence. God declares in the Quran, "I did not create ... mankind except to worship Me" (51:56). Muslims worship God, the only One worthy of worship, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, out of love and submission.

For an action to be regarded as worship, it must be performed with the pure intention of pleasing God. In addition to purifying one's intention, the action must be consistent with the teachings of the

Qur'an (Divine Guidance) and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Rites of Worship

There are certain core rituals that form the basis of a Muslim's worship of God.

Prayer:

Islam enjoins Muslims to offer five prayers throughout the day at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and night. Prayer enables Muslims to physically and mentally take a break from their worldly activities to connect with God several times a day. The prayers consist of praising God while standing, bowing and prostrating.

The prayer can be offered alone at home, at work, at a Mosque or anywhere (clean) or it can be offered in congregation at a Mosque (or anywhere clean). There are set words for the prayer, which are recited in Arabic. Muslims face towards the Ka'ba (Saudi Arabia) for this prayer; the direction can be found using a compass (Surrey: 118°) or using apps.

Qur'an:

The Quran, which literally means the 'oft-repeated,' is, according to Muslim belief, the final revelation of God to humanity. It provides guidance in all areas of life. The recitation, study and memorization of Quran form a central facet of worship for Muslims. The Quran is also recited during every prayer. Although it is widely read in its original Arabic, various translations in numerous languages are also available.

Supplication:

Muslims supplicate to and address God directly for their needs and desires anytime and anywhere. This direct relationship is an essential element of worship in Islam. Whether asking for guidance, seeking solace or beseeching



God for forgiveness, Muslims reach out to God at any time, without an intermediary.

Other core rituals include fasting in the month of Ramadan, giving Zakat (Annual Charity - 2.5% of savings) to the poor and needy and performing the Pilgrimage (Hajj) at least once in a lifetime if one is able to financially and physically.

As mentioned earlier, worship in Islam is much broader than these core rituals; it could be removing an obstacle from the road, helping someone in need, being good to your family, doing an honest day's work, sharing food with your neighbour, visiting a sick person, attending a funeral and so on. For these to be considered worship, the act must be done earnestly to please God and should be consistent with divine guidance.

In the end, worship in Islam extends to all aspects of life, transforming mundane tasks into spiritual ones. Muslims balance their religious duties and everyday responsibilities, aware of their accountability to God in the hereafter. When people fulfil their true purpose of worshipping God, it enables them to attain a profound sense of peace that results from submitting to the Creator, the only One worthy of worship.

"... Truly it is in the remembrance of God that hearts find peace." (Quran, 13:28)

Note: PBUH is an abbreviation for Peace be upon him, which is said after a Prophet's name for respect.

Sikh worship

Sikh worship is, quite simply, based on the Mool Mantar, which states:

EK OU _ AN KAAR	-	THERE IS ONE GOD
SAT NAAM	-	THE NAME IS TRUE
KARTA PURKH	-	THE CREATOR
NIRBHAU	-	WITHOUT FEAR
NIR VAIR	-	WITHOUT HATE
AKAAL MOORAT	-	TIMELESS AND WITHOUT FORM
A JUNI	-	BEYOND BIRTH AND DEATH
SAI BHANG	-	SELF EXISTENT
GUR PRASAAD	-	REALISED BY THE TRUE GURUS GRACE
JAP	-	MEDITATE ON THE NAME
AAD SACH	-	GOD WAS TRUE IN THE TIMELESS BEGINNING
JUGAAD SACH	-	GOD WAS TRUE THROUGH THE AGES
HAI BHI SACH	-	GOD IS TRUE NOW
NANAK HOSI BHI SACH	-	SAYS NANAK GOD WILL EVERMORE BE TRUE



Some thoughts from a non-religious perspective

The only recognised non-religious belief in the UK which has a full ethical philosophy and life stance, rather than being about one aspect of religion, knowledge or politics, is Humanism¹. Whilst many people with non-religious beliefs might not self-identify as Humanists, surveys show a significant proportion of them have similar beliefs².

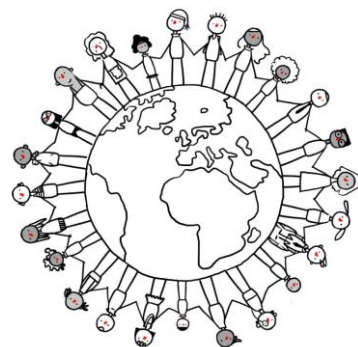


Humanism is an approach to life centred on people, their wellbeing and happiness. Its core values are empathy, compassion, reason and evidence. For Humanists the evidence points to the universe being a natural phenomenon with no gods or grand purpose of life waiting to be discovered. This inspires us to try to make the one life that we know we have as meaningful and happy as possible for ourselves and for others. Research and our own experiences tell us that being happy has a lot to do with helping others to be happy too.

As a Humanist, whilst worshipping a god has no place in my life, I believe we can all benefit hugely by being in communities which gather together to celebrate shared values, provide mutual support and learn from life's

experiences. This is true for school communities as well as for religion and belief groups and for family and friendship groups. It is important that all who participate are treated equally, are fully respected and made to feel welcome. For example, for some pupils with non-religious beliefs, especially if they are experiencing difficulties in their lives such as bereavement or severe illness, aspects of worship such as expressions of gratitude towards a god might be quite upsetting.

By bringing pupils together as a school community, at the same time as fostering school connectedness and caring, the occasion can be used to stimulate their imagination and creativity and inspire them to learn and reflect further about their own and others' beliefs and experiences. People's stories, including those of the participants, can be used to explore life themes together with examples from nature, art, drama, poetry and music from different cultures from across the world and throughout history.



Questions can stimulate curiosity and discussion, especially the big ones such as "What is the meaning of life?" and "How do we know what is true?". I'd like to consider another big one "How do we know what is the right thing to do?" as an example of a theme to explore.



Making good moral decisions and taking responsibility for them is very important to Humanists, as it is for others of course. Ethical dilemmas in school assemblies or lessons can be an excellent way of engaging pupils and illustrating how people use their beliefs to help them in their everyday lives.

¹ <http://humanism.org.uk/humanism/humanism-today/non-religious-beliefs/>

² Ipsos MORI poll January 2007 indicated 36% of people are humanist in their basic outlook



For example, as a Humanist I try to decide what is best to do by using reason and evidence to take account of the particular situation and possible consequences of different actions, combined with using empathy. I find the Humanist version of the Golden Rule to "Treat others as you would like them to treat you *in their situation*" very useful for helping me to be empathic.

I believe we should celebrate the Golden Rule as not only can it help us as individuals to live ethically but it is wonderfully unifying across all people as it is shared by all major religions and ethical beliefs. It is awesome that the first known written version "Do to the doer to cause that he do thus to you" goes back over 3500 years ago in the Egyptian story "The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant"³.

The Golden Rule also provides an opportunity to show how people with different beliefs can use different routes to come to the same understanding. For example, some may believe the Golden Rule was given to them by their God, whereas as a humanist I believe our ability to do the right thing evolved naturally, as humans have always lived together in small groups. We are learning more about how some animals like elephants and bonobos can also show empathy and compassion to each other.

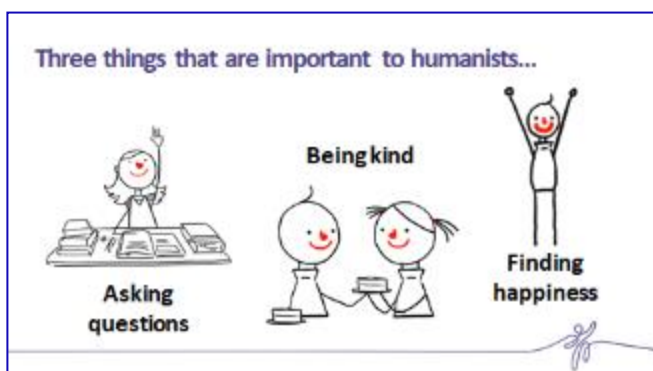
Assemblies for All (supported by Humanists UK) is a website providing schools and teachers access to hundreds of high-quality, inclusive assemblies which welcome all pupils regardless of their religious or non-religious beliefs or background.
<http://assembliesforall.org.uk/>



The assemblies have been developed by education professionals from over 50 organisations ranging from charities like Amnesty, Oxfam, and Unicef, to the UK Parliament and the BBC.

To support teachers to find what they are looking for, the assemblies are organised by theme, organisation, key stage, and, for many of them, by a corresponding event in the calendar. The calendar contains notable dates across the year so that assemblies can be held to mark important events such as International Women's Day, World Environment Day, and Martin Luther King Jr Day.

Assemblies for All includes two assemblies specifically about Humanism for key stages 1 to 2 and key stages 3 to 4. They are suitable for use on World Humanism Day (21st June) or to provide a general introduction to humanism <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/assemblies/>



³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Rule#Ancient_Egypt