

Denby Free CoE VA Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

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Statement of intent

‘Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.’
Matthew 5:16

The place of Collective Worship at Denby Free CoE VA Primary School is to inform our understanding, explore our spirituality and celebrate our Christian faith. As a Church of England school, Collective Worship has a very high priority in our school day. We know that every child matters and we can support their development through the teachings in the bible. We strive to ensure the children of Denby free are equipped with the skills needed to meet the challenges of our ever-changing world and make their own positive contributions to our global society.

Introduction
This policy has been prepared by the governors and headteacher with assistance from the teacher coordinating collective worship. *The Diocesan Adviser for Religious Education has also been involved. Diocesan guidelines for collective worship have been referred to.*

The right of withdrawal.
The parents' legal right to withdraw their child from acts of worship is clearly laid out in the school prospectus where it states 'parents may request that their children are withdrawn from collective worship.' If there are any children whose parents exercise their right to withdraw them from worship alternative activities will be provided in consultation with the children's parents. This does not mean that the children will be in any way exempt from the Christian ethos of the school which underpins the whole of school life. Parents are made fully aware of this when they enrol their children.

Aims and Objectives
Denby Free CoE VA Primary School we always seek to reflect in our worship the Christian foundation of the school and its care for all who work here. Children are helped to understand the meaning of Christian worship and we hope that believers will be able to share in it and that others of no faith will reach the 'threshold of worship'.

Our central aims of collective worship are to:

- enable children and staff to explore and celebrate the differences and diversity found in the variety of forms of worship in the Christian tradition.
- lead the school community to the 'threshold of worship' in order for them to make an informed choice about their own involvement and to consider their own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- seek to deepen and widen the experience of those of 'faith' and encourage those of 'no faith' so that they begin to feel for themselves something of what it means to worship.
- use celebration, silence, stilling, reflection, contemplation, meditation, prayer, song, symbols and imagery as vehicles for worship and spiritual growth.
- provide opportunities for the whole school community to address God directly through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit through acknowledging his presence, reflecting upon his character and giving Him praise and honour.
- use a vocabulary of worship that encourages the whole school community to attend, participate and lead worship.
- encourage all present to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework by learning more about the Christian faith and by encountering Christ through worship.
- raise awareness through reflection of the ultimate questions of life relating to matters of faith.
- reaffirm, strengthen and practise key Christian values and celebrate each unique individual member of the school community as made in the image of God.
- nurture and encourage respect and care for God's created world by promoting a positive attitude to environmental issues locally, nationally and globally.
- seek to provide opportunities for spiritual, social and moral development that is characterised be feelings such as awe, wonder, being uplifted, elation, appreciation, gratitude, respect, and reverence.

- develop a sense of community within the school, the locality, (e.g. local church) and foster the sense of being part of a wider community though the celebration of achievements, festivals and special occasions.
- foster a concern for the needs of others.

In summary within our daily act of collective worship, we aim to provide opportunities for children to:

- provide an opportunity for children to worship God;
- celebrate all that is good and beautiful and express thankfulness for the joy of being alive;
- provide opportunities for children to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the darker side of life;
- ensure that the experiences provided are relevant to the age, aptitude and family background of the children;
- give time for silent reflection and exploration of inner space;
- illustrate forms of worship that others have found helpful in their spiritual development, e.g. silent contemplation, dance, singing;
- provide a rich variety of forms of expression, e.g. art, drama, music, story and give children the opportunity to experience these at their own level rather than teachers imposing their own interpretations;
- take place in an environment that is conducive to worship, which is professionally coordinated and properly resourced;
- always invite, never coerce, remembering that children will be at different stages of spiritual development and that they should feel able to respond and participate at their own level.

(*National Society Web site, 2007*)

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Monitoring and evaluation are part of a whole school cycle of self-review, and this will be achieved over time by asking all stakeholders to reflect on school worship.

Monitoring

Monitoring of collective worship will be carried out jointly by the headteacher and the worship co-ordinator. The link Governor for RE and Collective Worship will also support in the monitoring of Collective Worship. Useful strategies for collecting the evidence will include:

- written observations; checking that practice matches planning
- observing children's attentiveness and level of interest
- conducting occasional formal observations of collective worship and providing feedback
- seeking feedback from children, staff, parents, governors, incumbent and visitors
- observing the extent of the collective worship's influence on children's attitudes and behaviour throughout the school
- holding regular discussions with colleagues
- gathering written comments from colleagues on the worship planning sheet

Feedback will be brought to staff meetings which will review collective worship which will be held regularly. This will occur on an annual CPD and monitoring cycle.

Evaluation
The information gathered via one or more of the strategies listed above will be analysed carefully in order to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the collective worship. The worship co-ordinator, the headteacher and foundation governor, will be the main evaluators. Formal evaluation of collective worship will take place at **least annually** as detailed in the school improvement plan and collective worship action plan.

Review
The headteacher, governors and staff will review this policy every *three* years. A worship planning sheet is kept weekly to ensure that acts of worship are generally compatible with the requirements of the policy and to inform our learning and planning for further developments. These will regularly include any formal and informal evaluations of acts of collective worship which will assist monitoring, future planning and delivery. Visitors outside the school community who are regularly involved in acts of worship are provided with a copy of the collective worship policy.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities
A daily act of collective worship is held for all children regardless of their background of culture or religion. Every effort is made by the school to involve all children unless withdrawn by their parents in accordance with the law.

Responsibilities
It is the ultimate responsibility of the head and governing body of a school to ensure a daily act of collective worship takes place. At Denby Free the responsibility to co-ordinate the act of worship is held by the Collective Worship lead. She plans themes, invites and liaises with visiting speakers and keeps a record of the content of each act of collective worship. Monitoring and evaluation is the responsibility of the foundation governors.

Conclusion
Denby Free CoE VA Primary School collective worship is highly valued, and every effort is made to ensure that all children and staff take an active part in a high-quality daily act of collective worship. Worship may contain many elements but at Denby Free we seek to specifically ensure that the act of collective worship is a learning experience as well as a spiritual encounter.