St Laurence Church Infant School

Collective Worship Policy

Approved by:	Local Governing Board
Last revised on:	July 2026
Next review due by:	July 2027

"Do all things with love: love of learning, life and each other"

"Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs."
(Psalm 100:2)



Introduction

St Laurence Church Infant School is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School. Established in 1714, the St Laurence Schools are thought to be the oldest church schools in Birmingham. They are attached to St Laurence Church, itself one of the oldest churches.

Our values are firmly rooted in Christian faith and belief. An Act of Collective Worship reflecting the Christian traditions of our school and expressing our school's Christian vision takes place each day.

Our worship is designed to be inspiring, inclusive and invitational so that no matter whether a person has an Christian faith, another faith or no faith; the time together is accessible and people may participate at whatever level they chose. Our Collective Worship supports the spiritual and moral development of our children and is a shared celebration.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of Collective Worship. Alternative provision can be arranged for children at these times.

Aims

- We aim to provide a loving, Christian environment, which will give the children confidence to develop in knowledge and skills. Collective Worship is seen as a most important aspect of school life which can make an enormous contribution to the spiritual and moral development of us all.
- Our worship will be invitational, inclusive and inspiring.
- Our Worship will help children and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world, to encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and find their own response to this. It may lay the foundations of a mature and adult faith in Christ.
- We will continue to maintain links with the Parish Church and its community and invite leaders from the wider Christian community.
- We will encourage children to be aware of and respectful of other religions.
- In planning Collective Worship in our school we will take account of the particular needs of the children with reference to their ages and stages of development, and try to ensure that our worship is relevant and significant.
- Collective Worship will be planned to take account of the Church Year and introduce some of the rich Anglican traditions including the Trinitarian nature of God. We will use a cross, candles and Bible and invite participants to join in some simple responses, prayers and hymns.

- We will try to evoke feelings from which Worship arises most naturally, such as the senses of awe, wonder, mystery and thankfulness.
- As a means of worship we will use both sacred and secular stories, prayers, hymns, songs, music and some simple responses.

We will maintain our traditional links between the school and the Parish Church by:

- Inviting clergy from St Laurence Church to lead an Act of Collective Worship each week.
- Ensuring that the school regularly attends services at St Laurence Church.
- Arranging for the Reception children to make an informal visit to St Laurence Church during their first term as some will not have been in a church before.
- Using St Laurence Church to enhance learning in RE and History.
- Exchanging some prayers and hymns between the school and St Laurence Church, especially some of the great prayers from Christian liturgy and hymns enjoyed by children.
- Encouraging people from the parish to be involved with our school, including volunteering within school and serving as PCC representatives on our Local Governing Board.

Through Collective Worship pupils will be offered a space and a place for the telling of the Christian story. They will be offered an understanding of worship through being invited to participate in or observe prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity. Opportunities to reflect on the beauty, joy and pain of the world will be given. Pupils will be given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time will be given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark the seasonal festivals of the Christian calendar. Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

Our pattern of worship

Weekly pattern

In normal circumstances, each day, all classes meet in the hall for Collective Worship from 9.00 am until 9.30 am. The beginning of the day is chosen as a way to set the tone for the whole day ahead, and 30 minutes gives time to explore and respond to themes in depth.

Mondays: World Aware Worship –

On Mondays, Collective Worship is led by members of the Senior Leadership Team and focuses on being "World Aware" by bringing a Christian perspective to global issues. This may involve responding to emerging events, for example by using Picture News materials; or shining a light on issues of discrimination, environmental destruction or abuse of UNCRC. Voice 21 Oracy Skills are promoted to give children opportunity to talk about their own views. An provocation for spiritual reflection is provided using windows mirrors and doors questions. Opportunity for prayer using Prayer Jelly Babies, or through a prayer familiar to the children is offered. This is followed by birthday congratulations. Families of children celebrating their birthday are specifically invited and, in addition, other parents and visitors are also welcome.

Tuesdays: Theme of the Week Worship
On Tuesdays whole school Collective Worship is usually led by members of teaching staff in turn. The worship follows the time of the church year or is part of a series designed to understand the teachings of Jesus and The Bible. Recent themes have been Parables, Creation to Revelation and "Doing All things

with Love". Each class may receive an object or picture to put in their spirituality space to remind them of that act of Collective Worship. Worship is planned to include an engaging introduction through drama, games, videos

Wednesdays: Wellbeing Worship
On Wednesday, Collective Worship creates a sense of community with singing and prayer. This includes the learning of new hymns and singing of favourites. Prayer requests from classroom prayer boxes are shared and children are invited to prayed over these together. An aspect of spirituality is also explored. Once per half term on a Wednesday, a "Let Your Light Shine" celebration is held to allow children to share certificates and achievements from outside school.

Thursdays: Theme of the Week Worship
On Thursdays, during the interregnum of the parish priest at St Laurence Church, Northfield, whole school Collective Worship is led by a member of SLT and includes hosting a visitor from a local church. The theme of the week is explored in more detail. This ensures our young children have chance to build recall and a deeper understanding of the Biblical passages.

Fridays: Amazing Attitude Awards
On Fridays, whole school collective worship focuses upon our school values by exploring what they mean for our children. The Bible is used to provide a Christian perspective on the value, and stimulus from real life, other faith stories or children's literature helps to develop understanding. We celebrate children who have shown the value by presenting a certificate. Children are challenged through windows, mirrors and doors questions to reflect on what the value means for them, and how they can take action to show this. Families of children receiving certificates are specifically invited and, in addition, other parents and visitors are also welcome.

When whole school Collective Worship is not possible, Collective Worship will be led by individual class teachers in their classrooms or shared over Teams.

There is one act of worship per week which all member of classroom staff attend, in order for the school to come together and for children and adults to have a spiritual experience. In all other acts of worship, either a teacher or teaching assistant from each class will be excused to provide individualised support to children. The children who receive this support will not always miss the same act of worship each week.

Worship during the year

The whole school visits St Laurence Church for Worship at Harvest, Christmas, Easter and Ascension. We celebrate the arrival of children into our Reception Classes in our Worship at the beginning of the year and hold a Leavers' Service, usually in St Philip's Cathedral to mark the departure of the Year Two children to the Junior School.

The Infant and Junior Schools come together once a year to celebrate the founding of the schools with a shared act of worship on the school field. This alternates between exploring life and inspiration of St Laurence, and the story of the founding of the schools by Dr Rev. William Worth in 1714.

Themes for Worship

Themes for whole school Collective Worship are planned by the collective worship lead. Worship follows the pattern of the liturgical year, with Ordinary Time being used to explore Biblical themes.

Best Practice in Collective Worship

UNCRC Article 14 states that Children have a right to their own thoughts, opinions and religion. By making our worship is invitational and inclusive, we as duty bearers are ensuring this right is upheld. By ensuring our worship is inspiring, we are encouraging our rights holders to develop and define their own thoughts and opinions.

Worship should be **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. This means we use invitational language and consider carefully our choice of words and songs. Children are invited to pray but are not compelled or expected to do so; they always have a choice. We invite them to pray or reflect in whatever way they would usually as a family, if that is part of their home experience.

Worship should be **inclusive**
Acts of worship need to be inclusive of all. Therefore, we choose topics and ideas that are shared by different faiths and worldviews. When we present Christian teaching, we 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 we take care that activities do not require expensive resources. We also offer a variety of activities, so that children and young people with differing needs can all find something they can engage with.

Worship should be **inspiring**
We aim for our 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?

Forms of presentation

Collective Worship can be approached in a variety of ways. At times it may be a reflective experience, at others celebratory or exploratory. First and foremost it should be thought provoking. Here are some of the ways the Worship focus can be presented:

Artefacts	Drama	Music	Puppetry	Prayer	Readings	Silence
Dance	ICT	Photographs	Poetry	Story	Visual images	Reflection

Structure of Collective Worship – creating the right atmosphere

It is important the children realise they are participating in an Act of Collective Worship as opposed to a secular assembly. At all times the children should understand that it is a special time in the life of the school, and for Christians, a time to be in the presence of God.

In all Acts of Collective Worship there will be a point of focus or a symbol as a reminder to Christians that God is with us. This may be an altar, candles, a cross and a Bible. Candles are an appropriate

reminder that Jesus is the Light of the World. Each Act of Worship follows a fourfold structure: Gathering, Engaging, Responding and Sending. The following elements are often used:

- Music is played as the children enter the hall to encourage quietness and reflection or create an atmosphere of joy and celebration.
- The leader greets the children by saying 'Good morning' to give a definite start.
- The candles are lit and a greeting and response used such as – 'The Lord be with you' – 'And also with you.'
- An opening prayer – usually chosen from traditional prayers.
- Statement about the focus of the Worship.
- Hymn or song.
- Stimulus for Worship, usually revolving around an activity, story, discussion, play etc.
- Reflection on the stimulus
- Prayer to focus on the Worship theme.
- Sharing of the Peace - 'The Peace of the Lord be always with you' – 'And also with you' – 'Let us share a sign of the Peace' [hold hands].
- Closing statement or Grace.
- The leader blows out the candles to signify the end of Collective Worship.

Prayer

Within our Collective Worship sessions and beyond, there will be opportunities for children to experience and take part, if they wish, in many forms of prayer, including traditional prayers and responses.

We teach the children the need for stillness and reflection, for respect for others and that there are different ways in which Christians pray: standing, sitting, kneeling, hands together, hands open, eyes closed, eyes open, head bowed, head held high.

Classrooms and the Library each have a "Spirituality Space" with a prayer treasure chest, which and Prayer Jelly Babies. The jelly babies represent the four types of Christian prayer: Andy Ask, Thea Thanks, Suzy Sorry and Peter Praise. The treasure chests can be used by children and adults to post prayers, and there is also a prayer request box for visitors in the office foyer.
Around school there are also other objects to invite prayer such as prayer stones, prayer books, battery powered candles or paper to write a prayer. The children are also invited to pray before lunch and before going home at the end of the day.

Prayer is invitational, children should not be forced to take part if this does not feel right for them.
A suggested introduction to prayer is:

> " I am going to say a prayer now, and if you would like to make it your own you can..*(e.g. join in with the words, say Amen at the end, copy my actions)* but if you don't want to pray, or you don't think you should, that is okay, you can use this time to … *(e.g. reflect on a given theme)* But now I'm going to … *(e.g. put my hands together and close my eyes, hold my hands up to God etc.)*

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

The planning, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship involves a range of members of the community, including staff, children and governors. When staff lead worship a Collective Worship Planning record will be kept, with a prompt for evaluation of the session. These are kept by the Collective Worship leader.

Each week a different class take responsibility for monitoring the worship by completing a children's evaluation form and recording their response in the Collective Worship Scrap Book.

Monitoring by the Collective Worship Lead is through participation in worship, the planning records, prayer spaces around school. Evaluation of the impact of worship by pupil voice, parent voice and observation of worship is undertaken by the collective Worship Lead, visiting governors and experts such as The Fioretti Trust Head of Ethos and the Dicoesan Distinctiveness Advisor.