

Gathering Together  
Kent SACRE Guidance for Collective Worship

## Contents

### Page

<b>3</b>	<b>Introduction from Kent SACRE and the Advisory Service Kent</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Kent SACRE Policy for Collective Worship</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>The Law on Collective Worship</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>What is meant by ‘collective worship’ and how does it differ from ‘corporate worship’?</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>What does ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’ mean?</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>A Policy for Collective Worship</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>What is the relationship between collective worship and the curriculum?</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Collective worship can contribute to SMSC</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Management of Collective Worship</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Planning</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>The Use of Themes</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>British Values</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Evaluating Collective Worship</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Evaluation Sheet</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Reflection and prayer</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Useful websites for Collective Worship</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Withdrawals</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Determinations</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Appendix A Collective Worship planning sheet</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Appendix B Themes</b>

### **Introduction from Kent SACRE and the Advisory Service Kent**

The Kent Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and the Advisory Service Kent (ASK) are pleased to offer this guidance which replaces that provided by us in 1994 and 1997. It is primarily for community schools. Controlled and aided schools and academies may find it helpful in addressing the principles of planning and delivery to develop good practice in accordance with the requirements of their trust deeds/articles of government.

It aims to support schools in meeting their statutory requirements with regard to collective worship by providing high quality educational experiences and opportunities that contribute to promoting the spiritual development of all pupils. A daily act of collective worship should be provided for all pupils/students on the school roll from Reception through to the Sixth Form. It explains and exemplifies key areas of legal requirements and educational thinking about the role and importance of collective worship in schools. Quality collective worship makes a vital contribution to developing and reinforcing a school's ethos and values and to the provision made for opportunities to support the spiritual (moral, social and cultural) development of all its pupils.

Legally in community schools the majority of acts of collective worship must be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' but this does not preclude consideration of other faiths and/or secular viewpoints. This is important for us in Kent as we want to celebrate and reinforce the Christian heritage and contemporary Christian experience of our county as well as including those from other faiths and none. In this way collective worship can provide opportunities to develop a reflective understanding of 'self', 'others' and 'God' thus contributing towards enhancing community cohesion.

## **Kent SACRE Policy for Collective Worship**

The key function of SACRE is to offer advice to the Local Authority on matters pertaining to religious education (RE) and collective worship. In order to offer relevant advice and to fulfil our statutory duty with regard to collective worship we:

- monitor the provision and quality of collective worship in schools;
- consider determinations and complaints;

Kent SACRE encourages all our schools to provide collective worship which offers opportunities for pupils to worship and reflect on key issues to do with life and living.

- ensure that legal requirements for collective worship are met.
- produce a policy statement and implement a collective worship programme in line with the guidance offered in this document.

All pupils/students have an entitlement to take part in an act of collective worship every school day which must be provided by the school. Collective worship should be appropriate to the family backgrounds, ages and aptitudes of the pupils who attend and take part in it.

The majority of acts of collective worship over any given term should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. This means that collective worship should reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any one Christian denomination. In voluntary controlled or voluntary aided schools with a religious foundation, worship should be in line with the school's trust deeds/articles of government. Where a school thinks that the requirement for the 'majority of acts of collective worship over any given term' being 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' is inappropriate for some or all of its pupils, it may ask SACRE to consider granting a 'determination'. Collective worship can take place in separate school groupings and at any time during the school day. The separate school groupings need to be usual school groupings, for example, a class or a key stage or a year group.

Collective worship should take place on school premises. If a community (or controlled) school wants to hold collective worship elsewhere on a special occasion it may do so, providing that it is additional to the usual daily act held on school premises.

Collective worship is part of the inspection process in community schools in relation to compliance with pupils'/students' legal entitlement and the contribution it makes to school ethos and values and to pupils'/students' personal development (including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. SMSC)

Collective worship, as with all curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities, should contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Collective worship should be planned and delivered to objectives that contribute to a balanced and broadly based curriculum, although it is not 'counted' as curriculum time.

## The Law on Collective Worship

A distinction is made in law between ‘an assembly’ and an ‘act of collective worship’.

An ‘assembly’ is any gathering of the school community for whatever purpose (e.g. to give out notices, for a fire drill, to say goodbye to a member of staff etc.). An ‘act of collective worship’ is a gathering of the school community to provide the opportunity for worship and reflection. Collective worship provides a daily focal point in school life for the transmission and development of all that school stands for in terms of its beliefs, values, moral codes and community ethos.

An ‘assembly’ and an ‘act of collective worship’ may take place together. Legally parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship. The school can require children to be present for the ‘assembly’ element of any joint gathering.

It is good practice to make a clear distinction between the ‘assembly’ and the ‘collective worship’ parts of the gathering when the two are taking place together. It is advisable to deal with administrative issues before the act of collective worship rather than after it. Schools can achieve the distinction between the administrative affairs and collective worship by using several different devices, for example by:

- playing music and/or lighting a candle or candles to mark the beginning of collective worship;
- changing personnel so that the person giving the announcements is not the same as the one(s) leading the act of collective worship;
- putting in place a focal point for collective worship (e.g. a bowl of flowers or a picture or a religious artefact as appropriate to the theme of the act of collective worship);
- singing a song or a hymn;
- having a moment of silence.

Collective worship provides opportunities to:

- worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore one’s own and others’ beliefs – this includes providing pupils/students with opportunities to reflect on the significance of Christian (and other faith traditions’) stories, events and festivals and how these might affect their lives;
- encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of collective worship or through listening to and joining in the collective worship offered; and
- develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive values.

### **What is meant by ‘collective worship’ and how does it differ from ‘corporate worship’?**

Collective worship is the gathering together of the school community on a daily basis to think about, respond to, reflect on and consider issues that are important to them as individuals and as a community. It provides the opportunity for those who wish to do so to worship God (however defined or understood). It is a time distinct from curriculum time that should offer learning experiences and opportunities that are meaningful and relevant to all pupils/students irrespective of their faith or non-faith stance or background. Collective worship experiences and opportunities should promote respect, tolerance and understanding, contribute to enabling children and young people to enjoy and achieve and to live healthy and fulfilled lives and thus contribute to enhancing community cohesion. Making a distinction between ‘collective worship’ and ‘corporate worship’ can be helpful. When a faith community gathers together for worship (e.g. Methodists, Anglicans or Roman Catholics on a Sunday or Muslims on a Friday) there are certain common assumptions and beliefs which adherents share (to varying degrees). This is the ‘corporate worship’ of the faith community. In a school setting, there are people from a range of different religious backgrounds, some with no religious belief, some committed to a secular world-view etc. It follows therefore that the ‘corporate worship’ of the faith community is not appropriate in a community school setting and that something of a different order is needed. This is what is termed ‘collective worship’. It is a collective gathering of the school community celebrating differences and sharing common values within the context of developing a reflective approach to life and living.

### **What does ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’ mean?**

The legislation requires that the ‘majority of acts of collective worship over any given term’ should be ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly non-denominational Christian character’ (apart from in voluntary aided and controlled schools of a religious foundation where it can be denominational). In essence, collective worship should take into account the broad traditions of Christian belief and practice. For example, it could mean exploring with children and young people specific Christian beliefs about God, Jesus, the Church, life after death as well as applying teachings such as ‘Love God and love your neighbour as yourself’. It may also deal with underlying Christian values such as love, forgiveness, justice, peace, judgement, celebration (of life, achievements, individuals, communities) and commitment (to self, others, God) etc. Many of these Christian values are common values shared with members of other faith communities and by those who hold secular world-views, although how they are interpreted may vary considerably within and across religions and world-views.

This means that an individual act of collective worship could be seen to be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character if it explored a value such as love or forgiveness without specific reference to Christianity

## A Policy for Collective Worship

### What might a policy for collective worship look like and how can we monitor and evaluate its effectiveness?

Four key questions can provide the basis for evaluating this important dimension of school life and of pupils'/students' personal development.

Where are we now?

An honest assessment of what is already working well and what needs to be developed further.

Include for example: consideration of attitudes towards collective worship (staff, pupils/students, parents, governors etc), resources, policy, visitors, links with curriculum and ethos/values promoted by school, etc.

Where do we need to be?

Base-line: meeting legal and educational entitlement; providing quality experiences and opportunities that support the school's ethos and values and pupils' personal development, including the spiritual and moral dimensions.

Other aspects of where the school needs to be will be dependent on answers to the first question.

What action do we need to include in our planning implications,

Time-scale, resources, financial and 'person power'

training, documentation, evidence, etc.

How will we know when we've got there? Success-criteria – opportunity to know we have made a difference and to begin the cycle again

**Collective worship should have its own policy and be treated as a separate issue to the religious education carried out in school.**

The policy needs to be a working document that is practical, relates to and has a similar format to other school policies. It should not be too long a document and should consist of:

- A philosophical statement
- The legal requirements, including the right of withdrawal by parents and teachers
- Time: at what time, each day will collective worship take place and for how long? \*
- Content of each day and approach i.e. praise through song, visitor, teacher led, praise, class presentation etc.
- Planning: who plans the worship, is there a specific coordinator, what are the themes used and what resources and books will be used?
- How staff, pupils and visitors contribute to collective worship
- Music: planning and what type? Live music, selection of CDs classical, modern, jazz, religious etc.
- How a record of the themes and content will be kept?
- Information for parents on the right to withdraw their child from collective worship, what provision the school can make and what the parent might provide for the withdrawn child
- Information on the staff right of withdrawal
- Future plans and date of review
- Evaluation to consider the impact of CW
- Not essential, but helpful as an appendix, is a planning pro-forma for members of staff so that planning and delivery are consistent.

A collective worship policy should be shared with and agreed by the Governing body who share responsibility for ensuring that the law is met with the head teacher. There should be a clear understanding of how the school intends to develop collective worship. (e.g. more pupil participation) This should be linked to funding, monitoring and training/support for staff.

**\*There is no nationally agreed length of time for collective worship, but 15 minutes is usually a suitable length. It can be held at any time during the school day.**



### **What is the relationship between collective worship and the curriculum?**

Collective worship is not counted as part of curriculum time but there are obvious links between it and a number of areas of the curriculum, depending on the theme/focus being followed. For example, collective worship can be linked to and introduce/complement/extend curriculum work in areas such as RE, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship, Music, English, Drama and Art. For those schools planning a theme, or skills-based curriculum for a year group or key stage, a judicious choice of theme/focus for collective worship can enhance the curriculum experience.

Likewise, the sharing of curriculum work through the collective worship programme can reinforce positive behaviour and hard work. It can contribute to pupils/students developing positive attitudes towards their work and their school. Values such as celebrating achievement (of different types and in different areas), sharing, valuing others, etc. are important in developing the school's ethos and the collective worship programme is a useful vehicle for these to be expressed and reinforced.

Collective worship allows pupils/students to reflect on their learning and place it within the context of belief and faith, relationships and exploring what it means to be human. It can help them make sense of the world in which they are growing up.

The whole curriculum and extracurricular experiences and opportunities provided by the school should promote the development of the 'whole child' – physical, academic, social, moral, cultural and spiritual. Collective worship has an important part to play in this by providing 'space' in a busy schedule to celebrate the school's ethos, reinforce common values and positive behaviour and to worship God (however defined or understood). It provides a 'reflective time' in the day to promote personal and spiritual growth.

Collective worship is important to a school's provision for the spiritual, moral social and cultural development opportunities it offers for its children and young people. Their reactions in and through collective worship are important indicators of how they are responding to such opportunities. It is not only the content that is important. It is also important to ensure experiences and opportunities that promote reflective and deep thinking, and sometimes action, about and around issues of spiritual, moral, social and cultural concern.

Collective worship can contribute to SMSC by providing opportunities for:

**spiritual development** by helping pupils/students think about, consider and reflect on/pray about:

- their own beliefs and views (about God, who they are and their relationships with others/the world);
- other people's beliefs and views (about God, who they are their relationships with others/the world);
- take time to be quiet and 'find space' for themselves and their thoughts (for those from a faith background this may involve prayer, for others it will not).

**moral development** by helping pupils/students think about consider and reflect on/pray about:

- their own values and principles and those of other people;
- why people behave in certain ways;
- the difference between right and wrong, good and evil and how they and others decide;
- the principles they (and others) have, how these are formed and how they inform the judgements and decisions they make about how to live.

For many people, understanding 'the spiritual dimension' within an educational context is more problematic than the moral, social and cultural dimensions. 'Spiritual' is not the same as 'religious' although for many people the two are related and indeed intertwined. To be human is to be 'spiritual' in the sense that human beings are more than the purely physical. There is wide agreement that there is a non-physical dimension to human life and living. How that is defined or understood is where the variety of opinion arises. For some, the non-physical dimension might be defined as 'mind' with no pre- or post-existence from the human body. For others, it might be defined as 'soul' or 'spirit' or 'atman' and have either a pre- or a post-existence (or both) from the human body. For some, the 'non-physical' is totally independent of God, religious experience or religion and for others, it is intimately dependent upon them.

### Collective worship

**social development** by helping pupils/students think about, consider and reflect on/pray about:

- how they relate to themselves and to other people and how others relate to them;
- how they care for themselves and for others (locally, nationally and internationally);
- how to live in harmony, getting on with others even when they are different from you.

**cultural development** by helping pupils/students think about, consider and reflect on/pray about:

- the richness and diversity of the world in which they live including experiencing aspects of their own and others' cultural and religious traditions through music, stories and celebrations;
- the similarities and differences between culture, ethnicity and religion.

## **Management of Collective Worship**

### **What are the responsibilities of the headteacher and governors?**

Headteachers and governors should be aware of their legal responsibilities with regard to collective worship and discharge their function of ensuring compliance and quality across the school.

In community schools, the final responsibility for collective worship lies with the headteacher in consultation with the governing body. In voluntary aided and controlled schools, it lies with the governing body in consultation with the headteacher.

The headteacher may delegate the day to day management of acts of collective worship to a collective worship coordinator, who may work with a planning group to develop and deliver the programme.

It is good practice to ensure that the collective worship policy is reviewed periodically (possibly on a two- or three-year cycle) and received by the governing body. The governing body needs to monitor collective worship provision and impact as part of whole school self-evaluation and improvement planning. Governors and staff need to be kept informed and receive training to enable the school to implement statutory requirements and provide a high-quality entitlement for all pupils/students through their experiences and opportunities of collective worship.

The headteacher and governors need to ensure adequate resourcing (time, training and direct financial support) for collective worship. This guidance recommends that this is identified separately from any other budget.

### **Who might be the collective worship coordinator and what might they do?**

The headteacher may choose to act as collective worship coordinator or may delegate this responsibility to another, preferably senior, member of staff. Since collective worship is important in developing the school's overall ethos and values and providing opportunities for its expression, it is important that the role is seen as being an important one within the school. In some schools, the RE subject leader is also the collective worship coordinator but this is by no means 'a given'. The RE subject leader has the same right as any other member of staff not to be involved in collective worship although, as with other staff many choose to be so.

The Kent SACRE encourages all our schools to appoint a collective worship coordinator who will have both a leadership and a management role for this important aspect of school life and pupils'/students' development. Their leadership role is in setting a strategic direction for the development of collective worship and their management role is to do with planning and resourcing the day to day experiences and opportunities provided.

The role could involve:

- reporting to the headteacher and governing body on matters relating to collective worship provision and development;
  - arranging for training for staff (and governors)
  - ensuring that collective worship is incorporated into the school's self- evaluation and development cycle;
  - developing and maintaining documentation for effective planning (long, medium and short term), recording, monitoring and evaluating acts of collective worship;
  - seeking and being responsive to the needs and views of pupils/students, staff and parents with regard to collective worship;
  - managing the budget including buying and maintaining a resource collection for use in collective worship;
  - setting themes/foci for collective worship to ensure a coherent and developmental programme;
  - organising visitors to come into schools to enhance the collective worship programme ensuring that they are appraised of the aims and purposes of collective worship within the school context

While having a member of staff in overall charge of collective worship, ideally it should be planned jointly and led by different members of staff throughout the term to show that it is a meaningful act undertaken by your school community. The best collective worships are those that are planned thoroughly with shared ideas and responsibility. A planning sheet, pinned up in the staff room and shared or on the intranet, gives everyone a chance to contribute

- Collective worship should be a specifically planned activity
- Clear forward plans should be available, for at least a term in advance.
- Planning sheets should be kept in a file to show what has already been covered
- Major festivals should be approached from a different angle each year
- There should be an opportunity to monitor and evaluate the school's provision for collective worship

## Planning

### Appendix A is a planning sheet

As collective worship consists of a group of people coming together at an appropriate time, in an appropriate place intentionally to focus upon things of worth and value for the group you should find the general features of:

- A sense of special time
- A sense of special place
- The intention of focusing on matters of worth 'beyond the everyday'
- A sense of occasion

It should also be educational and planned as an explicit and implicit learning experience. It should contribute to the education of the pupils and facilitate spiritual growth and respect of each other's religious beliefs and practices. This may be done by evoking the sense of beauty, awe, wonder or feelings of pride, pity, sharing or by exploring the spirituality of life and experience.

Variety of content and of presentation

This can include:

Different presenters

Visitors from different faiths

Outside groups

Artefacts

Stories

Music

Overhead projection

Video clips

Focal points e.g. a picture or candle.

The pupils should also be involved in a meaningful way:

Being encouraged to ask and answer questions

Acting a story

Miming to a story

Reading

Pupils' artwork can be turned into an OHT for reflection time

Poems or prayers written by pupils can be read out

Sometimes the pupils themselves can be the presenters.

Gathering Together

It is a good idea to have a different type of collective worship for each day of the week:

Led by a visitor

Led by the headteacher

Led by a member of staff

Led by a pupil or small group of pupils

Led by a whole class

Praise of achievements

Praise through song (hymn practice can be turned into collective worship by using the words of a hymn as a prayer or reflection).

Of the above the one to be very careful with is the whole-class led collective worship. It must be remembered that this is the time for the community to come together in an act of worship and should not degenerate into a 'show and tell' session of all that the class has learnt this term. If it is your practice to invite parents to this event, it must be made clear that this is your collective worship time and not a show or exhibition of work. This is an opportunity for the RE syllabus work to link to collective worship. Pupils could act out a story they have heard, 'hot seat' a character from a book of inspirational writing or discuss the artefacts associated with a religion or a festival. Pupils could read from their own sacred book, compose their own prayers or make up a 'Thought for the Day' or 'Week', for the school to reflect on.

### **Collective Worship in the Class or Form Room**

Although the ideal practice would be to conduct collective worship with the whole school present this is not always possible, particularly in secondary schools. Collective worship can be carried out in the classroom or during form time and can be an equally enriching time for the participants if it is a carefully planned activity.

It is important to make sure that the general features of a good collective worship, as above, are adhered to, particularly the sense of occasion. It does not need to be as long as a whole school worship, between 5 and 10 minutes of 'special' time set aside should be enough. Some schools have a bell or gong that is rung to mark the beginning and end, putting up a picture or an overhead transparency for the pupils to focus on or lighting a candle are also ways of indicating that this is a special time within the classroom setting.

A collective worship in the classroom or with a form group can be more intimate than with a larger group of pupils and the pupils can be encouraged to ask and answer questions or lead the worship themselves. It is advisable that the same theme is kept throughout the school and some guidance on this from the coordinator would be useful for teachers. For instance, a pack with the current theme, some ideas on how to expand on it and some ideas for the prayer or reflection to be used. The important part of collective worship is the prayer or reflection and the short time given to pupils to think quietly. Some schools have a thought for the day or a school prayer which can be used during this sort of worship. If the planning sheet is put up in advance in the staff room, teachers can all contribute ideas towards the content of the worship time.

## The Use of Themes

### Appendix B has a number of theme ideas

A theme can be a word or phrase or picture which acts as a trigger. Your choice of theme could last for one day, a week, a half term or the length of a festival e.g. Lent. However, one theme used for too long can become boring. A good choice of theme would:

- Invite reflection, opening up matters of spiritual worth and value
- Be multi-dimensional and able to be developed in different ways
- Be attractively worded, for instance using alliteration ie 'Festivals of Food and Fasting'
- Be relevant to the audience, connected to something they have heard of
- Be appropriate.

Variety of content and of presentation

This can include:

Different presenters

Visitors from different faiths

Outside groups

Artefacts

Stories

Music

Overhead projection

Video clips

Focal points e.g. a picture or candle.

The pupils should also be involved in a meaningful way:

Being encouraged to ask and answer questions

Acting a story

Miming to a story

Reading

Pupils' artwork can be turned into an OHT for reflection time

Poems or prayers written by pupils can be read out

Sometimes the pupils themselves can be the presenters.

It is a good idea to have a different type of collective worship for each day of the week:

Led by a visitor

Gathering Together

Led by the headteacher

Led by a member of staff

Led by a pupil or small group of pupils

Led by a whole class

Praise of achievements

Praise through song (hymn practice can be turned into collective worship by using the words of a hymn as a prayer or reflection).

Of the above the one to be very careful with is the whole-class led collective worship. It must be remembered that this is the time for the community to come together in an act of worship and should not degenerate into a 'show and tell' session of all that the class has learnt this term. If it is your practice to invite parents to this event, it must be made clear that this is your collective worship time and not a show or exhibition of work. This is an opportunity for the RE syllabus work to link to collective worship. Pupils could act out a story they have heard, 'hot seat' a character from a book of inspirational writing or discuss the artefacts associated with a religion or a festival. Pupils could read from their own sacred book, compose their own prayers or make up a 'Thought for the Day' or 'Week', for the school to reflect on.

Variety of content and of presentation	The pupils should also be involved in a meaningful way:
Different presenters Visitors from different faiths Outside groups Artefacts Stories Music Overhead projection Video clips Focal points e.g. A picture or candle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being encouraged to ask and answer questions</li> <li>• Acting a story</li> <li>• Miming to a story</li> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Pupils' artwork can be turned into an OHT for reflection time</li> <li>• Poems or prayers written by pupils can be read out</li> <li>• Sometimes the pupils themselves can be the presenters</li> </ul>



## British Values

All schools have a duty to 'actively promote' the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs'.

- **Tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs:** British law protects freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs and this should never be the cause of prejudice or intolerance from others. CW can embody this attitude. Learning about different ways of life requires openness. Rather than just aiming for tolerance, CW can help pupils to value and celebrate diversity.
- **Mutual respect:** CW can help to engender positive attitudes towards diversity. It can allow pupils to explore what happens when people are not treated respectfully due to their faith or beliefs.
- **Democracy:** CW is a time where pupils can carefully think through issues for themselves
- **The rule of law:** Rules and laws from different faiths are often a focus of CW. Pupils may focus on how these rules would affect their own lives and lives of believers
- **Individual liberty:** CW can be a time for pupils to consider questions about identity and belonging. They may think about the way they are themselves and free, but also think about constraints and responsibilities placed on all of us by our cultures, faiths and beliefs.

Also, consider whether the displays in school promote British values through: Celebration of key Religious festivals, Celebration of key events – Remembrance Day – do staff / pupils have the wear a poppy? Is Britain celebrated?

### Evaluating Collective Worship

Self-evaluation helps you to focus on an aspect of school life and as a community to set shared goals. Internal self-evaluation should be a built-in and on-going process which staff and pupils are happy to use, and which they believe will bring benefits and enhanced performance leading to school improvement. Evaluation can take place at any time. **See below for a suggested monitoring sheet.**

#### Time

- Is the programme carefully planned with themes, music and a time for prayer or reflection?
- No set time limit but generally 15 minutes is an acceptable time allocation.

#### Aims, Does your collective worship:

- Contribute to personal development
- Foster a corporate identity
- Enrich emotional responses by giving a sense of a 'special' occasion and focusing on matters of worth which are beyond the 'everyday'
- Enhance spiritual growth.

#### Balance

- Is the content of collective worship a balance of Christian teachings from the Bible, celebration and festival, teachings from other faiths and issues relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, matching the ethos of the school?
- Is it educational, inclusive and enjoyable?
- Are you giving the children a message that this is a **very important time of the school day** when all members of the community attend?
- Is there a time when **success and achievement** is celebrated?
- Is there a **variety of leadership** of collective worship? e.g. head teacher, staff, visitors or children?
- Is there a focus for worship with a clearly defined break between **worship** and an **assembly**?

#### Resources

- Planning sheet, Suitable music CDs and live music, Pictures /Candles/Artefacts for children to focus on
- Links With other events or celebrations in the school back to the school religious education programme. Although religious education should be treated separately from the collective worship programme, it is good practice to link some of the learning from the religious education syllabus into collective worship.
- Are children of all faiths esteemed by mention of their festivals?

## Evaluation Sheet

School:	Venue
Leader:	Start Time:
Date:	Finish Time:
Observer:	Age Group:
THEME:	
CONTENT –Broadly Christian element - age appropriateness - use of music, visual focus, quietness, relevance to pupils	
SELF-PRESENTATION: leadership - delivery – structure – pace - quality of interaction - strategies for engaging and involving the pupils – warmth	
ATMOSPHERE: calm – respectful - reflective – joyous - inclusive	
PUPIL/STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT: ready listening - willing response to questions - willing to share ideas – willingness to participate e.g. through drama, singing, reading	
BRITISH VALUES / SPIRITUAL MORAL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	

## Reflection and Prayer

There must be a time of silent prayer/reflection during the collective worship time for it to comply with legal requirements. Pupils must be allowed to respond in ways that are appropriate to them. In Sutton, there are children from a huge number of faiths, and relatively few withdrawals, the leader of the collective worship must respect the variety of faiths and therefore mainly Christian based prayer is not always suitable. We cannot pressurize children into praying, therefore you need to think of different strategies to introduce this part of the collective worship. The leader should make it clear when the time to be silent has come.

This can be done in several ways:

- The leader can say 'I am going to say a prayer from the ..... faith now and I want you to listen and think about what I am saying'
- 'I am going to say some words found in the inspirational writings of the ..... community which I want you to think about quietly'
- 'Now, while we are quiet, I would like you to listen to the words of a well-known prayer'
- 'I would like you to either say a quiet prayer now or think quietly about what we have heard this morning'
- Pupils could be trained that a gong, chime or Indian bells are an indication of the beginning and end of a time of silent reflection.
- Lighting a candle could also be a sign that this is a time of silent reflection
- Projecting a suitable image for pupils to focus on.

Different faith communities pray in different ways and in different positions, telling pupils to close their eyes and put their hands together may therefore not be suitable. It may be better to tell children to sit quietly and comfortably and to suggest that it may help to either close their eyes or focus on a visual aid you have chosen.

It should be remembered that it is the private response of each participant that constitutes the worship and not the repetition of prayers or the use of a particular deity's name. If each person has the opportunity to make their own response, then no one is excluded by their religious or non- religious attitudes.

## Useful websites for Collective Worship

Website address	Types of resources	Phase
<a href="http://www.assemblies.org.uk">www.assemblies.org.uk</a>	Updated weekly to fit in with seasons and times in the year, but also deals with topical issues and archived materials, prayers and reflections also available	Primary & secondary
<a href="http://www.teachersdozen.co.uk">www.teachersdozen.co.uk</a>	Collective worship presentations, CDs and DVDs, also linked with SEAL themes	Primary
<a href="http://www.prayerspacesinschools.com">www.prayerspacesinschools.com</a>	Wider than collective worship but gives opportunities for pupils age 5-18 to explore faith and spirituality in an experiential way	Primary & secondary
<a href="http://www.fischy.com">www.fischy.com</a>	Music resources for use in collective worship – linked with spiritual health and wellbeing – links with SEAL	Primary
<a href="http://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk">www.worshipworkshop.org.uk</a>	A Church of England website focused on helping schools build better worship	Primary & secondary
<a href="http://www.collectiveworship.com">www.collectiveworship.com</a>	Multimedia resources in the form of ready-made acts of collective worship	Primary & secondary
<a href="http://www.stapleford-centre.org">www.stapleford-centre.org</a>	There are some free downloads for collective worship taken from Margaret Cooling's book Wisdom for Worship	Primary
<a href="http://www.fischy.com">www.fischy.com</a>	Music resources for use in collective worship - linked with spiritual health and wellbeing - links with SEAL	Primary
<a href="http://www.imaginer.co.uk">www.imaginer.co.uk</a>	Out of the Box Worship is a multi- sensory approach to KS1 class worship linked with values themes	Primary
<a href="http://www.reboo.co.uk">www.reboo.co.uk</a>	Subscription based websites providing digital, 'ready to use' material each week for from time and class collective worship	Primary & secondary
<a href="http://www.spinnaker.org.uk">www.spinnaker.org.uk</a>	A Christian organisation that seeks to support primary schools in the delivery of Christian religious education and collective worship.	Primary
<a href="http://www.schoolswork.co.uk">www.schoolswork.co.uk</a>	Dedicated to resourcing and training Christian schools work. Features resources and links	Primary & secondary
<a href="http://www.yfcschoolsconnection.co.uk">www.yfcschoolsconnection.co.uk</a>	A website from Youth for Christ featuring assembly ideas and material	Primary & secondary
<a href="http://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk">www.barnabasinschools.org.uk</a>	Variety of ideas and resources to support collective worship in schools	Primary
<a href="http://www.tentenresources.co.uk">www.tentenresources.co.uk</a>	Daily collective worship resources designed to be used within the classroom or whole school	Primary & secondary

## Withdrawal from collective Worship

Parents have the right to withdraw their child(ren) either wholly or partly from acts of collective worship 'on grounds of conscience'. From September 2007, students in the sixth form may withdraw themselves from acts of collective worship and do not need to have their parents' permission to do so. Parents do not have the right to withdraw their child(ren) from 'assemblies' only from acts of collective worship.

Schools need to ensure that parents are aware of their right to withdraw their child(ren) from the whole or part of the collective worship programme.

The headteacher and collective worship coordinator should discuss their reasons for withdrawal with the parents and the school should stress the importance of the programme to school life (ethos, values, sense of belonging etc.) to see if an accommodation can be reached.

If a pupil is withdrawn, the school remains responsible for his/her health and safety whilst they are on school property but should not incur any extra work or cost.

A parent who withdraws their child(ren) from collective worship may arrange for him/her to take part in religious (corporate) worship (see 3b) elsewhere or on school premises providing that it:

- is at no additional cost to the school;
- does not in effect replace non-denominational worship with denominational worship within the school;
- does not interfere with the child's education (e.g. if it is elsewhere that the child is on time to the next lesson etc) and that the alternative provision is consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum.

Teachers have the right to withdraw 'on grounds of conscience' from acts of collective worship and cannot be required to lead acts of collective worship, although many are happy to do so. Few teachers withdraw from attending acts of collective worship, seeing its value to the life and work of the school, irrespective of their own faith or non-faith stance. The SACRE believes that the guidance laid out here allows for a broad and inclusive approach which supports the development of the ethos and values of the school community and which promotes enhanced community cohesion.

Teachers do not have the right to withdraw from 'assembly', only from the element of an assembly that is deemed 'collective worship'

## **Determinations**

A school may apply to the SACRE for a 'determination' which in effect lifts the requirement for the 'majority of acts of collective worship over any given term to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'. This is applicable either to the whole school or to some pupils in it and for a set length of time. The character of the collective worship offered by the school for some or all of its pupils could then be changed to, for example, 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Muslim character'.

A determination does not change any other aspect of the legal requirements for collective worship (daily, location, appropriate to backgrounds, ages and aptitudes etc.).

The process for seeking a determination can be obtained from the Kent SACRE RE Consultant. At the time of going to print, no determinations have been sought from the Kent SACRE.

## Appendix A

Collective Worship planning sheet A grid designed to trigger ideas when planning collective worship or a series on a particular theme.

Issues to raise

---

People to involve

---

Activities to include

---

Experiences to share

---

Values to reflect on

---

Stories to use

---

Music to play

---

Ideas to explore

---

Words to use

---

Opportunities to reflect

---

Things to tell

---

Focus

---

Gathering Together



## Appendix B Themes

Achievement	Conflict	Good News	Memories	Remembrance	Ultimate
Advent	Courage	Greed	Miracles	Respect	Questions
Age	Creation	Green Living	Mistakes	Rewards	Understanding
Aims	Customs	Handicap	Music	Risks	United Nations
Ambition	Darkness	Happiness	Natural World	Roots	Us and Them
Anger	Day and Night	Harvest	Naughtiness	Rules	Values
Animals	Death	Hearing	Neighbourhood	School	Victims
Art	Diaries	Heroes and Heroines	New life	Seasons	Victories
Authority	Disasters	Hobbies	New Year	Secrets	Virtues
Autumn/Harvest	Disciples	Holidays	Old and New	Selflessness	War
Awareness	Discovery	Holocaust	One World	Sharing	Water
Awe and Wonder	Divali Easter	Homelessness	Opportunities	Sins	Ways of Seeing
Barriers	Education	Honesty	Ourselves	Slavery	Wealth
Beginnings Beliefs	Endings	Hope	Outsiders	Sorry	Why are we here?
Birth	Environment	Humility	Parables	Spirituality	Wisdom
Blindness and Sight	Expectations	Ideals	Parents	Strength and Weakness	Wonder
Books	Explorers	Imagination	Patience	Sukkot	Words
Bridges	Failure	Influences	Patriarchs	Surprises	Work
Bullying	Faith	Injustices	Patterns	Symbols	Worship
Candlemass	Families	Inspiration	Peace	Team work	Xenophobia
Candles	Famous People	Inspirational Writings	People	Temptations	You and Me
Caring	Fantasy	Jealousy	Pilgrimages	Ten Commandments	Youth and Old Age
Celebration	Fear	Jesus	Poetry	Thanks	Zero Tolerance
Challenges	Feelings	Journeys	Possessions	The Gurus	
Change	Festivals	Justice	Poverty	The Mool Mantra	
Charity	Followers	Key People	Praise	The Past	
Children	Food and Fasting	Kindness	Prayer	The Unknown	
Choices	Forgiveness	Language	Prejudice	The Word	Faith Festivals from all faiths
Christmas	Freedom	Laws	Promises	The X Factor	
Co operation	Friendship	Leaders	Prophets	Thoughtfulness	
Commitment	Future	Lent	Proverbs	Time	
Communication	Gifts and Talents	Light	Quiet	Tolerance	
Community	Giving and Receiving	Listening	Ramadan	Trials	
	God	Loneliness	Reflection	Trust	
	Good and Evil	Loving	Refugees	Truth	
		Loyalty	Relationships	Turning Points	

