



# Totnes St John's Church of England School

## Collective Worship

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. Our motto sums up our vision for our school:

Spurring each other on with the courage to make a positive difference for ourselves and others.

As a Church of England school, we work together to fulfil our core vision. At Totnes St John's, our vision deliberately references the book of Hebrews, coupled with the fundamental message of St John: 'life in all its fullness':

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.  
Hebrews 10:24, NIV

Collective worship in a Church school should enable every child and adult to flourish and to 'live life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10). It will help educate for wisdom, knowledge and skills, hope and aspiration, dignity and respect, and developing community and understanding of living well together.

### **Policy statement**

In Totnes St John's C of E, worship is central to the life of school and is the main platform for exploring the school's vision. It is well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery, exploring the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

For Christians in Church, worship is about honouring God and responding to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a Church but is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. The family backgrounds may be very different and collective worship must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

At Totnes St John's C of E, collective worship aims to be inspirational, invitational and inclusive and will lead people to a threshold where they can witness worship and join in, if they wish.

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 pupils' accomplishments and to mark the seasonal festival calendar.<sup>1</sup> Pupils will be offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.<sup>2</sup>

## **Church of England guidance**

This Collective worship policy at Totnes St John's C of E draws on guidance from the Church of England.

In Totnes St John's C of E school, significant numbers of children come from families who are members of another faith or who hold a non-religious world view. Part of the distinctively Christian nature of Church of England Schools is that they should be hospitable and inclusive to all in the community they serve. As collective worship occupies such a central place in the life of the Church school, we make this clear on induction, and it is hoped that parents will be making a specific choice of the school, knowing that the distinctive ethos will determine a Christian tradition within collective worship.

## **Legal requirements**

All maintained schools must hold a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, other than those in a nursery class or a nursery school. This can take place at any time in the school day and in any groupings. Collective worship in a Church of England School must be in accordance with the tenets and practices of the Church of England. In other words, the law on collective worship that applies in a community school, that it should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', is not relevant. Worship in Totnes St John's C of E therefore is distinctly Christian and reflects Anglican traditions.

## **The right of withdrawal**

The 1944 and 1988 Education Acts state that parents have the right to withdraw children from collective worship and suitable arrangements should be made to accommodate these children.

On occasions, a parent may ask for their child to be withdrawn from collective worship. There is an expectation that parents wishing to request a withdrawal will meet the headteacher to discuss their concerns and requirements. We aim to establish:

- the elements of worship to which the parent would object to the child taking part
- the other aspects of school life that are affected by the Christian foundation of the school, such as prayer and reflective areas

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<sup>1</sup> Collective worship in a C of E school must be in alignment with the religious foundation of the school (Christian). However, schools in all contexts have a responsibility to mark, respond to and learn from the festivals of other faiths. This may be designated as a separate act, not to be conflated with collective worship.

<sup>2</sup> 'To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God.' William Temple (1881-1894).

- the practical implications of the child’s withdrawal e.g. which member of staff would support a child who has withdrawn.
- whether the parent will require advance notice of such worship and, if so, how much.

Where parents have withdrawn their children from collective worship and request religious worship according to their particular faith or denomination, the governors and headteacher will seek to respond positively to such requests providing:

- such arrangements can be made at no additional cost to the school
- that the alternative provision would be consistent with the overall purposes of the school curriculum as set out in the Education Acts

If the parent asks that a pupil should be wholly or partly excused from attending any religious worship at the school, then the school must comply. This means that a parent may, for example, request their child does not take part in a carol service when otherwise the child takes part in daily collective worship.

## Guiding principles for collective worship

Collective worship in Totnes St John’s C of E aims to:

- play an integral part in how our pupils develop as individuals
- provide an opportunity to develop our understanding of our school vision, our character gateways (see Appendix) and our spiritual self by exploring the awe engendered by the world around us.

Our vision provides a guide to how we live our lives, influencing our attitudes and actions, encouraging us all to take responsibility for our own learning and behaviour. Our inclusive worships are an important part of our school day, and we enjoy coming together to invite pupils and staff to pray, reflect, ponder and share.

## How collective worship is organised

Collective worship is led by a variety of different members of the school community:

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
Whole-school worship	Whole-school worship	Class Worship	Open the Book/Local Clergy	Key Stage Celebration Worship
Headteacher	SLT	Teachers	Local Clergy	SLT

## **Planning**

Our worships are linked to the 'gateways' of our curriculum (see Appendix), where character education is central to our vision. Every gateway has a linked biblical story as a basis, but we aim to provide children with multiple opportunities to develop spiritually and morally. We believe all our children can 'Achieve and Flourish' through this approach.

A collaborative approach is taken to develop the yearly worship plan, with support from the school's leadership team, local committee and Ethos group. Each half term has a theme for collective worship, based on our Christian values. Those leading worship are encouraged to relate their worship to this theme and asked to plan their act of worship in as much detail as they would any other learning activity. The themes chosen are broad enough to allow all those leading worship to approach it from their own perspective. This will mean that, by the end of the week, the pupils will have had the opportunity to reflect on the theme from a variety of viewpoints. Alternatively, class teachers may develop their worship from themes and events that occur in the curriculum during the week. On occasions, it is recognised that those leading worship may feel that they need to respond to local or national events.

## **Organisation**

Within our collective worship we provide a wide variety of stimuli to help pupils to reflect upon and respond to the central theme. These include story, music, PowerPoint images, poetry, drama puppets, games, dance, questioning, singing and praying.

As an Anglican school, we reflect aspects of Anglican worship. We use the Bible as a source of Christian teaching and give it a prominent place in our worship. We follow the cycle of the Anglican year, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost and some saints' days. We can use liturgical colours for our worship focus.

Our worship follows a liturgical pattern, for example, Gathering... Engaging... Responding... Sending. At some of the acts of worship, members of the school community share the Peace Meditation and silence is used. We use Anglican sentences and responses (e.g., The Lord be with you ... and also with you).

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The local committee and Ethos members support and monitor the effectiveness of collective worship. The headteacher and the senior leadership team are responsible for providing effective collective worship, ensuring the professional development of staff and monitoring the effectiveness of collective worship. Local clergy and church partners support the school and local community through visits and collective worships. Teaching and support staff lead effective collective worship and allow pupils to reflect on their own personal beliefs.

## **Staff development and training**

All staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams.

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

The Academy for Character and Excellence is responsible for ensuring that the school meets the requirements for worship detailed in the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Evaluation Document. It is also tasked with monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the school community, in consultation with the headteacher.

Evaluation takes place in the following ways:

- a daily reflection by a pupil in the collective worship diary
- evaluation by one class per week, with a rota for this
- attendance at collective worship by a local committee member, with feedback provided to the local committee termly, with this as an item on the agenda
- local committee members ensuring that collective worship is reviewed on a regular basis.

## **Policy development and dissemination**

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

## **Links to other policies and documentation**

We ensure that the principles for collective worship are reflected and applied in our policies and practice, including those that are concerned with:

- Pupils' personal development and wellbeing
- SMSC and PSHE
- Staff recruitment, retention and professional development
- Care, guidance and support
- Behaviour, discipline and exclusions
- Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians
- Working with the wider community.

## Other useful documents

These can be found on the Diocesan website.<sup>3</sup>

Date of last review and updated: 31 January 2022

Headteacher signed:  Date:

Chair of Governors signed:  Date:

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<sup>3</sup> <https://exeter.anglican.org/schools/christian-ethos-siams/collective-worship/>

# APPENDIX: ACE Character Gateways

## ACE Character Gateways

Citizenship	Leadership	Flourishing	Expression	Explorers
<p>Character Values</p>  <p>We are <b>Compassionate</b></p> 	<p>Character Values</p>  <p>We are <b>determined</b></p> 	<p>Character Values</p>  <p>We are <b>responsible</b></p> 	<p>Character Values</p>  <p>We are <b>honest</b></p> 	<p>Character Values</p>  <p>We are <b>aspirational</b></p> 
 <p>The Good Samaritan</p>	 <p>Moses' Escape</p>	 <p>Parable of Talents</p>	 <p>Zacchaeus Tax Collector</p>	 <p>The Widow's Mite</p>