

Astbury St Mary's Collective Worship policy 2024 – 2025

Introduction

Astbury St Mary's CE Primary School is committed to offering high quality collective worship. We recognise and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing our Christian vision. In practice this means that structure, planning, evaluation, participation and collaboration of worship are all taken seriously by the school.

The Church of England Vision for Education 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good' states: We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives...Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this. (p.10).

At Astbury St Mary's collective worship is seen as the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together. Worship is central to realising our aims and vision which is based on Ephesians 5: 2 'Walk in love as Christ loves you'.

Vision: We nurture a school community where everyone experiences a love of learning and of life; everyone is able to 'walk in love' knowing they are loved by Christ.

At Astbury St Mary's we aim:

- To know Christ, who loves us;
- To demonstrate Christ's love to each child on their learning journey;
- For our children to 'walk in love' in our community and our world;
- For every child to be secure in God's love.

Why do we worship?

We join together in an Act of Collective Worship to thank our God through our prayers and praise Him through songs. Worship is at 2:50pm each afternoon; it is when we make time for God in our busy lives. We worship for at least 15 minutes every day. We want everyone to feel respectful and calm but relaxed and comfortable and welcome in God's family.





Collective worship is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. At Astbury St Mary's collective worship is:

- Inclusive, where all are included, have a voice and are listened to.
- Invitational, offering everyone the opportunity to engage in the act of worship, whilst allowing the freedom for those of other faiths and none to be present with integrity.
- Inspiring and creative, impacting the whole community and motivating them into action.
- A valued part of the culture of the school, breathing life into every aspect of the school day.

No assumption is made that we all have the same beliefs and values.

Through Collective Worship, we blend Christian, Biblical teaching and values education in order to create opportunities for children to develop physically, emotionally, personally, socially, mentally, spiritually and intelligently.

We do this by following a weekly structure:

Day	Focus	Who	What	Where
Wednesday	Worship led by our incumbent Community worship	- Revd Steph – priest in charge Y1 – Y6 (EY join for festivals)		In church – first Wednesday of the month. School Hall
Thursday	Revisit and reflect	Miss Blythe Y1 – Y6		School Hall
Friday	Celebrations	Y6 Whole School		School Hall
Monday	My happy mind worship	Class teachers In classes		In class
Tuesday	Sung worship	Miss Blythe / Mrs Hodder Whole School		School Hall

Legal background

We accept that: "All pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each day take part in an act of collective worship" unless "the parent . . . requests that he may be wholly or partly excused from attendance at religious worship in the school" [1988 Education Reform Act 6(1) and 9(3)]

We acknowledge the parents' right to withdraw their children and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. We make it clear that the act of worship is central to the life of the school and is not an occasion for evangelism. We also affirm that the withdrawal of pupils from collective worship would not isolate them from the Christian teaching the school gives.

For our school: "The daily act of collective worship required by law in the school shall be consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England."

Collective Worship at Astbury St Mary's CE Primary is delivered in accordance with the Church of England Guidance for Collective Worship: Inclusive, Invitational, Inspiring.

Who worships?

At our school parents can join in our worship each Wednesday and on festival days. Church schools are not just for Christians, we all respect each other's ideas about our faith. Worship is invitational to all our children and staff.

Worship aims

Through our collective worship we aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to:

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation; and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.

- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

Who do we worship?

Our God is God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. These three parts of God are called the trinity. Our worship reminds us of: God the Father: We say a prayer to God the Father called ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ and it begins with ‘Our Father’. In the Bible it tells us that God the Son, Jesus taught it to us. God the Holy Spirit: At the end of worship we say the Grace to ask that God as ‘Father, Son and Holy Spirit’ be with us in our daily life. We know that as the Spirit, God can be with us everywhere and that He is in all of the created world. God is life.

Worship structure

When planning collective worship, we build in a spiritual dimension with opportunities for prayer, reflection and quiet. Children are invited to pray or sing and there is a sense of respect for the integrity of our pupils. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. Each Act of Worship will follow the same agreed format for worship, this includes class led worship. The worship area at the front is special, the focal point for worship and should be treated as such. Nothing should be placed on it. Worship in the classroom still needs a focal point which includes a candle.

	Key ideas	What we do at Astbury St Mary’s
Gather	We are invited to prepare our hearts and minds to meet with God. We gather together for this special time of fellowship as a community	Music playing as children and staff enter. Talking is not allowed and this should be modelled by staff. Worship Leader: Good afternoon everyone Response: Good afternoon everyone Worship Leader: May the peace of the Lord be with you. Response: And also with you. Worship Leader: This is the day that the Lord has made. Response: let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Engage	We engage with the big things and the little things in life. We encounter Jesus and the stories of the Bible We listen to God’s message and consider how it might apply to our own lives.	How do we share and illustrate the story, message and or theme? (examples: story, video clip, drama, artefacts, pictures, poems etc.) How do we relate it to the Bible if it is not a Bible story? What verse can we share? What questions can we ask our community to engage them into the story, teaching or message?
Respond	We respond to what we have heard and seen through prayer, silence, stillness and reflection. We are given the invitation to worship God in different ways.	How do we allow the community to respond? (Think, question, act) Some examples: I wonder what I can do differently in response to this story? I wonder how you felt after watching the video clip? I wonder what you can do ...help./care for others, forgive, persevere or be a better friend etc. How will you incorporate reflection, silence or stillness into the worship? What opportunities will there be for formal or informal prayer? (e.g. teacher led, child led, spontaneous, planned, up on the screen, personal in your head, call and response, prayers used in Anglican Liturgy)
Send	We are sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the World We are all sent out with God’s blessing.	A worship song if required – match to the theme where possible or make the link as to why we are singing this particular song.

		<p>Worship Leader: God’s message as you leave the hall today think about... A reminder to everyone about how they can apply what we have heard at school, home and beyond.</p> <p>Worship Leader: Closing Prayers – I invite you to join me in saying our school prayer, The Lord’s Prayer Worship Leader: Let’s say The Grace. May the Grace...</p> <p>Worship Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Response: In the name of Christ Amen</p> <p>Music playing as children leave. No talking which must be modelled by the staff. Children are to leave the hall line by line, silently back to the classroom, staff to monitor.</p>
--	--	---

What do we do in our worship?

When we come to Collective Worship, we are showing that we are the Family of God (children and grown-ups who work in our school, our parents, friends and visitors), we are a community and value this time worshipping together.

When we are invited to pray, we talk to God; we do this out loud when we pray together and sometimes, quietly in our own heads, and we know God can hear us.

When we look at our cross and candle, it helps us to think about God and give our worship time as a special time to Him.

We light our candle as a ‘symbol’ (sign) that Jesus is with us as the ‘light of the world’ and that He is with us in our worship and daily life. We hope that like a candle lights the darkness, you feel that He will help you when you are afraid or worried.

When we sing, we are invited to join in. We choose songs that match with the seasons, the Christian year, our Family of God or giving thanks. Some are fun and louder, some are softer and thoughtful. Our songs can show the mood of our worship and that there are sad times, happy time and peaceful times. We have action and signing songs to include all.

When we listen to music, it can make us feel calm or lively. We use music as part of our worship, or to come in or leave by. Children might share special work to show us how good their work is or to help us to learn something new from them. Children might share a prayer that they have written or a poem. We celebrate when our team wins or plays sport with fair play. We clap children who join in competitions for sport, music or art. We often thank those children and grown-ups who look after our school and make it look so lovely, it takes special gifts and talents to look after nature and wonder at God’s creation. We celebrate when someone looks after another.

When we listen we learn about God and Jesus, the Christian Church and how Christians live their lives and celebrate the Christian year. We listen to stories that make us think carefully about our lives and how we live with others. Sometimes we learn about other faiths so that we can come to understand different beliefs and ways of living. The Vicar tells us about Christian festivals and we join in services for Harvest, Christmas and Easter. We learn about Advent, Lent and Pentecost.

When we join in through acting out stories, sharing answers and ideas, performing dance and music or making something for everyone to look at (like an Advent ring, a picture or model), we are adding to the worship and helping everyone to remember the message of our worship.

When we feel a sense of awe and wonder we recognise that we are a special part of God’s awesome, wonderful creation and that He is infinite and omnipresent, sometimes we can’t answer questions about God because He is too marvellous and we marvel at His work.

When we reflect we think about our life and think about what we have learned for our own lives. It might be about the way we behave (our moral and social life) or about how we feel inside and our sense of peace, calm and connectedness to the Spiritual world which is greater than our day to day routines. Reflection is our quiet time with our God.

Worship table

Items on the worship table include:

- Cross – with liturgical colour ribbon
- Candle
- Image of Mary and Jesus
- Bible

Liturgical Colours

Church calendar	Colour	Meaning	Dates
Ordinary	Green	Hope, life and growth	June – 23 November 2024
Christ the king	White	Purity	24 November – 30 November
Advent	Purple	Penance and preparation	1 December – 24 December
Christmas and epiphany	White	Purity	25 December – 12 January 2025
Ordinary	Green	Hope, life and growth	13 January – 4 March
Lent	Purple	Penance and preparation	5 March – 19 April
Easter	White	Purity	20 April – 7 June
Pentecost	Red	Sacrifice	8 June
Ordinary	Green	Hope, life and growth	9 June – 29 November 2025

Colours play an important part of the worship of the Church and they change according to the seasons of the Church year. Colours are a primary source of symbolism, and communicate to worshippers much about the nature of the lessons heard during the Liturgy of the Word (which are themed according to the seasons), and about what is done during worship. On Good Friday, black is sometimes used. Some churches are simply bare at this time instead of using colours for symbolism.