

Carlisle Diocese Board of Education
COVID Secure Collective Worship
Autumn 2020



Life in all its fullness

Part A: How do we worship “collectively” when we cannot gather?

As part of our recovery curriculum worship is, more than ever, a key element of the school day for pupils at Church of England schools. Worship offers our pupils an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and those of their school mates, as well as national and international events. It is also, importantly, a time to remind them about what hope means to Christians and how this may be relevant in their own lives.

In many of our schools, collective worship is a highlight of the school day. Pupils value the opportunity to come together and enjoy a shared experience. It enables them to find out about the lives of others in their school community and fosters a sense of mutual respect, empathy and understanding.

Finding innovative ways to re-create shared experiences without the whole school being in one space is therefore key.

Questions to consider before planning worship:



- Do all staff members understand the importance of worship as part of the recovery curriculum?
- Is worship well timetabled to allow enough time for stillness, reflection and growth?
- Are staff prepared and equipped to deal with difficult questions which may arise when pupils are given the stillness to reflect on their own experiences whilst not at school?
- Have you thought about how you can share pupil responses and engagement in worship so that it continues to be collective, even when you are not together?
- Will your chosen style or model for delivering worship work for everyone (for example, if you are using online resources, do all staff members who will be delivering worship have access to them – even a teaching assistant delivering worship on a 1-1 basis, for example?)

Togetherness through theme



Thought provoking worship prompts conversation – on the playground, round the school lunch table, round the family meal table (especially where siblings have both been present in the same act of worship) and in lots of other places.

Whilst the whole school cannot be in one place, it is still possible to have shared experiences. Many schools follow a values-based approach to worship. Focussing on a given value and exploring it in an age appropriate way, can be a wonderful way to ensure that all pupils are engaging in a shared experience without being together. There are many different ways this could be done and responses shared.

1. The ‘in-house’ technical route:

If you are brave enough and have the IT skills to support you, recording an act of collective worship or making a worship powerpoint slideshow which all classes can watch at the same time is a great way of providing togetherness. You could include some ‘big’ or ‘wondering’ questions. Staff using the powerpoint or video can pause to enable pupils’ participation and engagement. Did you know you can turn a powerpoint slide show into a video? Here’s a step-by-step guide if not:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8JV3w4TOVw>



Many schools have taken this approach during the period of school closures so that key worker, vulnerable and latterly, pupils in certain year groups in school, could share an experience with those pupils who were at home. The following example is shared with thanks to Beckermat School:

<https://www.beckermat.cumbria.sch.uk/attendance/collective-worship>

2. The 'external' technical route:

There are a large number of online collective resources available for use. Our favourites (which are all free unless otherwise indicated) include ...

- **Faith at Home in partnership with The Oak Academy** produced a weekly assembly during the summer term based around Christian values (hope, courage, love, humility, patience, resilience, kindness, generosity, vulnerability, compassion, flourishing). If you haven't accessed them already, they remain very current and include some great content which can be adapted for your school. They include prompt pictures, music to listen to, bible stories to read and 'wondering questions'. They are suitable for someone who has never led collective worship to read from. They can be used online or downloaded as pdf documents which can be printed off:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/faith-action/faith-home/i-am-school-leader>
- **Worship Workshop** is a good resource for model prayers, calls and responses:
<https://www.worshipworkshop.org.uk/>
- **Prayers from the Church of England** includes prayers for children:
https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/Prayer%20Book%20Digital%20Single%20Pages%202%20April_o.pdf
- **Assemblies.org:** includes a new (Sept 2020) 'Pause for Thought in the Classroom' series, designed especially for teachers to use in the classroom setting. For example:
<https://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/3580/pause-for-thought-in-the-classroom-changes-matter>
Another seasonal assembly theme 'In life, everything changes, but God is unchanging' can be found here:
<https://www.assemblies.org.uk/pri/2965/autumn-changes>
- **Flame Creative Children's Ministry** has a multitude of ideas for creating reflective prayer spaces with all age ranges (the playdough mats are fab): <http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- **Lectio 365:** Lectio 365 is a devotional resource inspired by Lectio Divina, a way of meditating on the Bible that's been used by Christians for centuries. Written by leaders from the 24-7 Prayer movement, and produced in partnership with CWR, this resource helps you engage with Scripture to inspire prayer <https://www.24-7prayer.com/dailydevotional>
- **#Off the Shelf:** a series of short collective worship videos that can be used at home or school, produced by the Diocese of Blackburn. Join a member of the team in their study, where they lead a short act of collective worship using resources off their shelf. Search for the videos on youtube.
- **Barnabas in Schools:** has a section dedicated to assembly ideas around Christian values:
<https://www.barnabasinschools.org.uk/topics/values>
- **Big start assemblies (£):** a subscription site, however it has 13 FREE assemblies featuring 'Giants of Faith' with 3-5 minute videos: <https://bigstartassemblies.org/free-assemblies/>
- **The Rhyming Bible (£):** by Bob Hartman is an excellent resource for Bible stories presented in an accessible way that could be integrated into collective worship. Song versions of the stories are also available, for example: 'Waiting in Line to See Jesus' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-nGMqkLbol>; 'The Baby in the Basket' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FERhjvITm6g>; 'Little Man Up in the Tree' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avu-aNSMAWM>
- **Jack in the Box (£):** fun, multi-sensory worship for Foundation Stage settings written by Early Years specialists. Resource price £28 September 2020, Jack the Labrador puppet price £10.50.
<https://www.imaginer.co.uk/jack-box-worship/>
- **William and Lucy (£):** Through story, images and reflective questions, this short book seeks to support teachers and children in planning and leading acts of worship. Produced by the Diocese of Canterbury, the book (price £12 September 2020) comes with downloadable resources to enable



and support pupil leaders in collective worship and contain good examples of ‘wondering’ questions.

Two further e-books (‘William and Lucy Explore Collective Worship at Home’ and ‘William and Lucy Tell Bible Stories’) and are available for free here:

<https://www.canterburydiocese.org/childrenandyoungpeople/our-schools/collective-worship/collective-worship-at-home/>

3. Phone a friend:

You may well have well established links with your local church and whilst you may not yet be ready for lots of visitors to school, if you ask, you may well find that your local Open the Book or church worship team are happy to read bible stories and put together some ‘wondering’ questions for you which will give your pupils some variation in content and free up some of you and your colleagues’ time.



Seeing friendly faces from the local community, even if only on screen, is a great way of reminding pupils that they still belong to a bigger family beyond their bubble.

4. Finding ways for pupils to share their responses:

Consider how you can share experiences safely between bubbles.

Suggestions include:

- **Class/bubble prayer spaces:** pupils could set up their own prayer space based on your whole class theme. Staff can photograph these and save them in a shared area so pupils get to see what their friends and siblings in different bubbles have been up to. There are lots of online resources to help you get started with developing prayer spaces, for example:



<https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/resources/177>

- **Big questions boards:** if pupils have access to their own set of post-it notes to avoid unnecessary handling of common resources, they could add either their own ‘big’ or ‘wondering’ questions to a board in their classroom which they could pose for other classes or bubbles (again by staff sharing them) or, if they are asked a wondering question or big question for the week by an adult, their answers could be collected and shared.
- **Newsletter:** don’t forget to include highlights from collective worship in your newsletters – you could choose a couple of questions or responses from each class/bubble which you include in your newsletter.



Part B: How do we “worship” effectively when we cannot sing?

Make it special

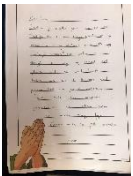


It is important to mark collective worship time as distinct from other curriculum areas (such as circle time or PSHE). You may already have a preferred way of marking the start of worship time (**Gathering**) such as a particular form of welcome you always use, call and response or an act such as lighting one or more candles. Consider how these acts can be adapted for use in the classroom or online and ensure that all members of staff are aware of them (remember some people now leading worship may not normally be present in whole school acts of worship).

The same is equally true at the end of the worship time. Ensure all staff members are aware of your school’s usual routines (**Sending**). Do you choose a pupil to extinguish the candle? Do you have a particular parting call and response or share the grace together? Whatever would normally happen during whole school acts of collective worship should happen in bubbles so that it still feels like “worship time”.



Engage the pupils



In addition to ‘big’ or ‘wondering’ questions mentioned above, think about how you can engage pupils fully in their worship. Perhaps with less emphasis on music (and singing in particular) you could focus on something else – pupils could write their own prayers. Perhaps they could make a special class book of prayers which could be used as part of worship time.

Listening

Although pupils can’t sing, they can still listen to and respond to music. Take the opportunity to expose them to some high quality worship music or music for reflection. Consider pairing it with images for some awe and wonder. Remember to seek the pupils’ feedback about how it makes them feel. You could try a wide range of different styles of music to both help pupils to find something that helps them to develop spiritually but also to encourage them to reflect on the different ways people choose to worship. Remember to celebrate the difference and diversity you encounter together.

Some wonderful examples in case you need inspiration follow. Encourage pupils to look at the faces of the singers to see how much they are enjoying what they are singing and how prayerful it is because they really mean it and are singing it to and for God:



Soweto Gospel Choir:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yUKoS_cEXY&ab_channel=nubianmazen

Watoto Children’s Choir: singing ‘We Will Go’

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCEGDkdXOcM&feature=youtu.be>

One Voice Children’s Choir: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKsdCTN6LQo&ab_channel=OneVoiceChildren%27sChoir

Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony (with a great video of awe and wonder images) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMJPZ-mu-Ts&ab_channel=2minstral

Karl Jenkins’ Benedictus: (including tour of the universe): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibwxzxER_pY

Arvo Part’s Spiegel im Spiegel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJ6Mzvh3XCc>

Matt Redman's 10,000 Reasons*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtwIT8JddM&ab_channel=MattRedmanVEVO

The Rend Collective*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reAlJKv7ptU&ab_channel=RendCollectiveVEVO

Rend Co. Kids and Rend Collective's album 'Sparkle Pop Rampage' is fabulous: try 'Feels Good (Upbeat Song)' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tt1PhKL1d38>, 'God of Science (Our Great God)' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJalNpOW7pQ>

Taize Community: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4Svh-gohg4&ab_channel=MostarTaize

Nathan Drake: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8YOPj5TnUM&ab_channel=citrail

Hillsong Kids' 'Ultimate Collection' album: good songs include 'Superhero' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7-pQrQBI_k, 'Let Your Light Shine' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXkxRNEy8XA>

For older children and young people:

'The Blessing' by Elevation Worship Kari Jobe, Cody Carnes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zp6aygmVzM4>

Stormzy 'Blinded by Your Grace': this is a great version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPuj6UISMhs>

Hillsong Worship: 'New Wine' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ozGKIOzEVc>, 'Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dygnweg_xzw, 'Broken Vessels (Amazing Grace)' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fiyYoe678yI>

Matt Redman and Tasha Cobbs Leonard: 'Gracefully Broken' from the album 'Glory Song' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJNR0IxbIP4>

Michael W Smith: 'Surrounded (Fight My Battles)': <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBl84oZxnJ4>

Switchfoot: 'Restless' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GiiQcyoKWjQ>, 'Thrive' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6Dr5t1IGh8>, 'This is Your Life' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sx9Rcl_EueM, 'Dare You To Move' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE-Krlqj4fk>

Building 429: 'Press On' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pv5wVS7yzk>, 'Where I Belong' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=he32vwIKQPY>

Casting Crowns: 'If We are the Body' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAWeHo8E7oE>

Claire Hamilton: 'Breathe on Me, Breath of God' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-udVqGNS2o>

Jewel: 'Hands' (a song of hope and a call to kindness during times of trouble) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfsS3pIDBfw>

Crossbeam: (songs available on Spotify) 'Change Me', 'Your Love, Oh Lord' and 'Part Two (Instrumental)'

Actions

For many of us, singing plays a huge part in worship and pupils will find it very difficult not to be able to sing their favourite songs.

Remind children about songs like, "Heads, shoulders, knees and toes" or "My hat it has three corners" in which part of the fun of the song is **not** singing and concentrating on getting the right action at the correct point in the song. Here's a quick reminder:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjZIO1eR9ko&ab_channel=PuddingTV-NurseryRhymes

Start with some worship songs for which your pupils already have well known actions and encourage them to listen to a version of the song online and respond and engage with the actions in the appropriate place.

Then move on to new and different worship songs. A few classics for actions:

Great Big God (there are million different versions available - show your pupils a few and let them choose their favourite): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ew8gpwv1Bs&ab_channel=KrugerKidsMinistry

I'm gonna jump up and down https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WodvQfoJogs&ab_channel=HumptyFell

He's got the whole world in his hands https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1CLIMjiTw&ab_channel=LifetreeKids

Make music in other ways: instruments

Pupils can participate in and enjoy worshipping through the use of instruments. Lots of instruments are easily cleaned and could be used safely (especially plastic and metal). Encourage pupils to use them prayerfully to make a loud noise of celebration, to gently tap during moments of quiet or reflection.

You could even ask your pupils to make their own instruments (decorate plant pots, fold a paper plate in half and staple some rice inside etc) which they could keep at their own workstation and know that it is something special to be used for worship.



And finally, please keep in touch

We'd love to hear about your wonderful and creative ways of worshipping in a COVID safe way. Please do keep in touch and send us your ideas, photos and videos.

Thank you for all you are doing to enable pupils in Cumbria to encounter God and grow in spirituality.

The Diocese of Carlisle Education Team