‘Time to Reflect’ – a guide to collective worship

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Reference documents:
• The 1988 ERA www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/contents (See ‘Chapter I section 6 & 7’)
• The 1996 ERA www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents (See ‘Chapter III sections 385-388’)
• ‘Collective Worship Revisited’ – a paper for all who are or should be interested in Collective Worship’, published by NASACRE, April 2012 – for information about NASACRE, go to www.nasacre.org.uk
• ‘School Inspection Handbook’ published by Ofsted (January 2015) available from this link
Introduction

Surrey SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) is pleased to recommend the revised: “Time to Reflect - A Guide to Collective Worship in Surrey County Schools”. Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools have their own Diocesan Guidelines, but may find some useful ideas within this document.

We are all aware of the many opportunities and challenges surrounding the whole area of collective worship in schools. These are issues which promote hard thinking and profound debate amongst all people, irrespective of their own personal beliefs.

SACRE would encourage all schools to pay particular attention to the section ‘Interpreting the law’, as it may come as a surprise to many that the legal definition of the act of collective worship is broad and offers schools significant freedoms, which need to be properly understood.

There is a section within this guidance specifically regarding the contribution of collective worship to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (January 2015) states that school leaders should ensure that the curriculum ‘includes a rounded programme of assemblies that help to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, providing clear guidance on what is right and what is wrong.’ It should also be noted that weaknesses in a school’s SMSC provision can be a limiting factor in Ofsted’s evaluation of their overall effectiveness. Schools may wish to include a copy of this guidance with other evidence when being inspected, to demonstrate their commitment to providing acts of collective worship that contribute to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

We have attempted to make this document as concise, practical and informative as possible, aware that many of the philosophical and even political questions surrounding collective worship in schools are still unresolved. In the light of current legislation, we offer the following guidance material, which we hope will enable schools to meet the legal requirements for collective worship in a way which is meaningful to the whole school community.

Our thanks go especially to the members of SACRE for their input and also to the authors of the paper ‘Collective Worship Revisited’ published by NASACRE, which has been used in preparing this guidance.

* Surrey SACRE, January 2015
What do we mean by ‘Collective’ Worship?

Collective worship in schools is not the same as corporate worship within faith communities. Corporate worship is a voluntary activity where the whole faith community is striving to be one body, heart, soul....family. Schools are required by law to hold an act of collective worship, recognising that it is different to that held by faith communities, which is the free association of worshippers. The distinction should be understood by the school and borne in mind by those organising and leading it.

There has been much discussion on the origin and meaning of the word ‘worship’. Here are two definitions:

- ‘worship’ comes from the Anglo Saxon ‘worth-ship’ i.e. to give worth or value to something or someone. Within this definition collective worship could be seen to be a daily gathering of the school community, or groups within the school, in order to explore shared values, and areas of shared concern and worth.
- the most common usage of the word ‘worship’ implies reverence paid to a supreme divine being or power & an openness to the transcendent.

In schools there will be a wide range of pupils and adults, with many who do not regard themselves as belonging to a particular faith group. Care will therefore need to be taken to achieve a balance between applying both definitions. There is additional material to be found on the SACRE sections of the SCC website, including some thoughts from members of SACRE regarding religious and non-religious perspectives on worship.

What are the Legal Requirements regarding Collective Worship?

A paper entitled ‘Collective Worship Revisited’, published by NASACRE (National Association of SACREs) in April 2012, reports: ‘Under the heading ‘State schools not providing group worship’, a survey for BBC local radio in September 2011 reported that ‘64% of the 500 parents questioned said their child did not attend daily acts of collective worship and 60% of the 1,743 adults asked said the legislation should not be enforced’. Notwithstanding the limited scope of the sample and the possible misunderstanding among those questioned at the use of the term ‘collective worship’ rather than the more commonly used ‘assembly’, these findings confirm a trend, well understood by professionals and SACREs.’

The findings of the Surrey SACRE questionnaire regarding collective worship (October 2013) confirm this trend within our local context, particularly at secondary level. The purpose of this document is to consider some of the possible reasons why collective worship may be misunderstood (and therefore why schools may be failing in their duty to provide it) and to reflect on its place within school life, not least in providing significant opportunities for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Legal requirements

The place of collective worship in schools is upheld by law and has been so since 1944. The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) affirmed its statutory position, relaxing some of the restrictions on the grouping and timing of Collective Worship, confirming what had become widespread practice in schools. The subsequent 1996 Education Act and 1998 School Standards and Framework Act further confirmed the requirements, since when there has been no change to this primary legislation, by which duty schools remain bound.
each pupil in attendance at a community, foundation or voluntary school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship (1998 School Standards & Framework Act – Part II Chapter 6 para 70 (1))

There are only two exceptions to this:
- parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship
- pupils in Y12 and above [the sixth form] may also exercise their right to withdraw.

If parents do make a request to withdraw their child, or a student in sixth form, SACRE recommends that careful discussion should take place between all concerned, especially in the light of the suggestions for inclusive worship contained within this document, so that informed choices can be made. Staff may also exercise the right of withdrawal.

The main provisions for collective worship are contained in Sections 6 and 7 of the Education Reform Act 1988, and in Chapter VI ‘Religious Education and worship’ (sections 70 & 71) and Schedule 20 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act.

The law states that collective worship in all local authority maintained schools must be:
- daily for all registered pupils on the school premises;
- organised to allow pupils to be withdrawn if their parents have so requested;
- ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character’;
- non-denominational (i.e. it should not reflect any particular Christian denomination).

The last two bullet points are expanded on in the next section ‘Interpreting the law’. It might be tempting for schools to avoid reading this section, but please don’t! Within the law, there are significant freedoms for schools, which need to be properly understood.

The law does not specify:
- timing and organisation of daily collective worship;
- the size and make-up of pupil groups. (but see Ofsted Handbook para 145).

The responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the Headteacher, after consultation with the Governing Body.

In Church Schools (VA or VC) collective worship must be:
- daily for all registered pupils;
- organised to allow pupils to be withdrawn if parents have so requested;
- in accordance with the religious character of the school, as determined by the Governing Body and in line with its Trust Deed.

It is also good practice for acts of collective worship in Church Schools to be as inclusive as possible, to enable pupils of other faiths or none to feel comfortable in being part of the collective worship. Church School collective worship is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 by Diocesan inspectors. Further guidance regarding the character and content of collective worship in Church Schools should be sought from the appropriate Diocesan authorities.

**Modifications to the law: ‘Determinations’**

Under Section 12 of the 1988 Education Reform Act and Schedule 20, para 4 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act, local authority maintained schools may apply to their SACRE for a
A determination does not remove the requirement for collective worship to take place, but does permit schools to hold acts of collective worship that are distinctive of another faith, though not distinctive of any particular denomination.

A determination is effective for a maximum of five years, after which it lapses if it has not been renewed by SACRE following a new application. After consultation with parents and the governing body of their school, a Headteacher seeking a determination should complete the form ‘Application for a determination’, which can be downloaded from the SACRE sections of the SCC website, along with details of the determination process. At present Surrey SACRE has granted a determination to a school in which a significant proportion of pupils are from faith backgrounds other than Christianity. Their determination allows them to hold acts of collective worship that better serve the needs and of the pupils attending the school.

Academies and free schools that seek a determination should apply to the Education Funding Agency.

**Interpreting the Law regarding Acts of Collective Worship**

It may come as a surprise that the legal definition of collective worship is broad, and offers schools significant freedom of interpretation. Once the scope of the freedoms within the bounds of the law is understood, it should empower schools to deliver collective worship that is truly inspiring, creative, inclusive, participative, challenging, educational and appropriate for the whole school community (including staff), of all ages, from all faiths or none, without any danger of indoctrinating anyone or compromising anyone’s personal beliefs. Collective Worship should therefore be:

‘...wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character...’

Firstly, collective worship can be *wholly or mainly...*, therefore collective worship does not have to be all *of a broadly Christian character*. Indeed, the 1998 Act specifies that *...not every act of collective worship in the school need comply....provided that, taking any school term as a whole, most such acts which take place in the school do comply*: there is opportunity here for variety and breadth, reflecting the religious and non-religious traditions of those who form a part of the school community. The only requirement is that over the course of a term, the majority of acts of worship should be ‘broadly Christian’. This requirement is confirmed by Ofsted in the ‘School Inspection Handbook’ (Jan. 2015 bullet 18).

‘...reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief...’

Secondly, collective worship must *reflect the broad traditions of Christian belief*; that is to say, it is broad rather than specific or exclusive, reflecting plurality and focusing, not on doctrine or traditions of worship, but on belief that is broadly Christian, but is not *distinctive of any particular Christian denomination.* An increasing number of schools now use a programme of values as inspiration for collective worship, many of which will have strong links to ‘broadly Christian’ beliefs. *(NB see also FAQ section)*

‘....an opportunity for pupils to worship....’

The key word here is *opportunity*. There is no compulsion to worship, and schools should make this clear to all who lead acts of collective worship. Worship is an open invitation, but it is for pupils – and staff – to use that opportunity if they feel comfortable doing so. It is this element
that makes collective worship more than an ‘assembly’, gives it its spiritual dimension and accords

**Collective worship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development**

special status to this time in the school day.

The overall purpose of the curriculum, as set out in the 1988 ERA, is to:

a) promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society;

b) prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life

‘This is a startlingly challenging duty placed on schools. Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils, as it has become known, is about the nurture of them as human beings and, as such, is the most important job a school is charged with fulfilling. Doing the same for society is mind blowing. It is a shared responsibility involving the whole school and the whole curriculum.’

[Julie Grove, former Chair of NASACRE]

Collective worship in schools could and **should** be a significant contributor to this overall aim, and give pupils opportunities to:

- develop cohesion amongst the school community, helping to promote and strengthen every member’s belonging and unique contribution to the school;
- celebrate being part of a school community;
- affirm the shared values of the school community;
- broaden pupils’ awareness of themselves, others and the world in which they live;
- explore areas which directly concern them, related to age, ability and experience;
- experience religious worship;
- explore and question their own beliefs and values, alongside the beliefs and values of others;
- become reflective, deep thinking individuals in a busy and complex society;
- deepen understanding of their own culture and that of others, recognising that cultural diversity is enriching rather than threatening.

The paper ‘Collective Worship Revisited’ says this about pupils’ spiritual development:

‘Of the terms in use to describe these aspects of an individual’s development, the word ‘spiritual’ causes the greatest unease in schools. Much misunderstood, it conjures up for many images of a variety of religious practice, giving the impression the word ‘spirituality’ is synonymous with religion. It is not.'
Religious faith is an expression of spirituality. In this educational context, spiritual development is used more broadly to describe nurturing the spiritual dimension of every human being, in recognition of the uniqueness of the individual and her or his humanity and potential. It is about helping pupils to develop the capacity to transcend the limitations of the physical world; to lift their horizons beyond the materialistic; to be creative; to consider ultimate questions about the meaning of life in general and their own lives in particular; to develop positive attitudes; to have hope. It goes further than what the child knows, understands and can do...to what the child is and is becoming.

What is frequently not realised is what a golden opportunity for supporting this development can be found in collective worship. It can make values explicit for pupils, challenge their thinking, extend their emotional repertoire, help them to know and celebrate who they are and understand what the school community stands for and aspires to.

Although, currently, Ofsted makes no judgements about the quality of provision for Collective Worship in schools, it makes much of pupils’ SMSC development, which is inspected under three of the four judgement headings for schools. In their ‘School Inspection Handbook’ (January 2015), Ofsted defines what is meant by pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (bullets 131-134). Many of Ofsted’s points of definition have strong connections with collective worship, and SACRE recommends that schools make the most of the opportunities that collective worship provides for enriching pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and so meeting these Ofsted criteria.

What is good practice in Collective Worship?

Collective worship should:
- be well planned, recorded and evaluated (including gathering pupils’ opinions);
- be accessible to all pupils, taking into account their ages and aptitudes whilst showing sensitivity to family backgrounds, including those with a faith, or none;
- take place in an appropriate atmosphere which promotes attitudes of respect, awe and wonder, enquiry, self understanding;
- encourage reflection;
- use a variety of resources and strategies to encourage and retain pupils’ active involvement.

Creating the right environment for collective worship is often worth more than a thousand words. An appropriate ethos for collective worship can be nurtured through some of the following:

- **Whole school involvement**
  By staff choosing to be present and involved during the majority of acts of collective worship, signals are given to the pupils that this is a significant event in the life of the school community.

- **Music**
  Music can help give a sense of occasion and pitch the mood for the whole event. Using music from a variety of traditions and cultures also enhances collective worship.

- **Stories**
  Using stories from faith communities brings cultural richness to Collective Worship. A range of storytelling techniques can be used, from ‘all-together’ stories where children join in the actions that accompany certain words, to reflective storytelling using objects. As with using prayers from different faiths, it’s important to set religious stories in their context e.g. ‘This is a story from the life of Jesus which is special to Christians. As you listen, think about how Jesus shows compassion.’ or ‘This is a Jewish story which is told at Sukkot, the time of Harvest.’

- **Symbols**
Many schools make a distinction between the notice-giving element of ‘Assembly’ and the act of collective worship. Some schools aid this transition by the lighting of a candle, the ringing of a bell, or using familiar phrases such as ‘Now let’s be quiet and still….’ in order to indicate that collective worship is about to begin.

Collective worship should involve all pupils assembled – by involvement we mean that pupils should be absorbed in what is going on, rather than passive or distracted. So:

- keep collective worship brief and to the point;
- use a variety of techniques to keep pupil interest: read or tell a story, mime, dance, music, silence, pupil participation, video clip, PowerPoint etc.;
- use props or mimes to make a reading come alive – e.g. a letter, newspaper, flash-card, clothes, food etc.;
- use amplification if pupils find it difficult to make themselves heard whilst contributing from the front, helping them to speak clearly and with confidence;
- ensure a variety of styles or collective worship throughout the year.

There are some sample acts of worship within this guidance, showing how a theme introduced on a Monday might be developed during a week, and the theme contributes to pupils’ SMSC development. There are 2 suggestions each for the Primary and Secondary phases.

**Encouraging reflection in Collective Worship**

When an Ofsted report comments on the need for a school to provide more opportunities for spiritual development, it often means that there were no opportunities for pupils to reflect upon what they have just seen and heard, including within collective worship. Some acts of collective worship observed by SACRE members in the past have been stimulating, inspiring and challenging but could have been even more effective if they had contained an opportunity for reflection. Time for reflection offers pupils a moment of stillness and quiet in a busy world, and enables them to internalize the main ideas within collective worship.

**Reflection can be encouraged by:**

- asking pupils to listen quietly to a piece of music and consider what they have just heard;
- using phrases such as ‘let us just sit quietly for a moment and think or pray about what we have just seen or heard’ or ‘let us close our eyes and open our hearts and minds’;
- leading pupils through a time of guided reflection e.g. giving them ideas, names of people to think about etc.;
- lighting a candle and asking pupils to focus on the flickering flame;
- using pictures or images.

During reflection pupils are able to absorb and respond to the main ideas within collective worship at their own level. There is no compulsion to worship or act against their own consciences. This is often referred to as the ‘threshold experience’. Moments of reflection may allow pupils to cross the threshold into worship - it is then up to each individual, whether they pass beyond the threshold.

It may be that some pupils will want to follow up issues raised within collective worship. This may be on an individual basis or collectively.
The issue of prayer in collective worship may be of particular concern to some schools, where the majority of pupils and staff do not consider themselves to be practising members of a faith community. Prayer, as with worship and reflection, is an opportunity that's presented, not an expectation to be fulfilled. No-one attending an act of worship should feel compelled to pray; neither should anyone wishing to pray not be given an opportunity.

Any member of staff or outside visitor taking collective worship, irrespective of their personal faith stance, will need to consider whether the prayer uses language and concepts which are accessible to the ages, aptitudes and sensitive to the family backgrounds of pupils. For example, Muslim pupils will have difficulties with prayers that address God as Father, as this goes against their fundamental belief in the Absolute One-ness of God. Also Muslim and Jewish pupils will have difficulties with prayers that describe Jesus as the Son of God, Christ, Lord etc. It should also be remembered that physical positions for praying that are specific to one faith may not be appropriate for pupils of another. Pupils from non-religious backgrounds may be most comfortable with a phrase such as ‘Let us share together our wonder at all that’s amazing in our world.’

Here are some suggested strategies:

- Some prayers can be inclusive to most religions by using phrases such as ‘Dear God…..’
- It is possible, within the legal framework of the ERAs, to include prayers from different religions and introduce them with phrases such as:
  - ‘Now we are going to listen to a famous Christian prayer called the Lord’s Prayer which Jesus taught to his disciples’ or ‘Here is a well known prayer used by Hindus’.
- Using phrases such as:
  - ‘I’m now going to put my thoughts into a prayer. If you like, you can make the prayer your own and join me at the end, by saying Amen.’
  - ‘Let us sit quietly and pray or think for a moment about what we have just seen and heard’.
  - ‘If this is something that you and your family would be comfortable with, then join with me…’
- Invite children or staff to read out their own favourite prayers or ones they have written for the occasion.

Music in Collective Worship

Music is a powerful medium for creating an atmosphere in collective worship. It can be used:
- at the beginning of collective worship as pupils are coming into the hall;
- as the main focal point of the act of collective worship, for example where pupils reflect upon the words of a song;
- as part of collective worship, with whole school singing;
- to mark the end of collective worship.

Many schools hold a ‘singing practice’ or ‘singing assembly’ during the week. For this to be an act of worship, pupils should also be given space to reflect (most usefully on the words of the songs being practised!) As with prayer, singing songs (especially those with ‘religious’ words) should be an invitation and not an expectation, and pupils should be given the freedom to sing, or not.

Some other considerations:
- Does the school use a variety of musical styles, ancient and modern, from different cultures, for pupils to listen to?
− Is music used to enhance moments of reflection?
− Are pupils able to participate in music, through singing or playing musical instruments?
− Are pupils encouraged to think about the lyrics of a song (and are those lyrics appropriate for the age and / or religious backgrounds of the pupils?)
− Is music an afterthought or is it planned to be integral to the whole act of collective worship?
− Is the school aware of copyright issues relating the use of music in schools?
− Are pupils given opportunities to contribute their own compositions to collective worship?

**Visitors to Collective Worship**

Visitors leading collective worship should be well-prepared and clear about the nature of collective worship within schools. Schools should pay particular attention to guidance issued by Ofsted regarding pupils’ behaviour and safety i.e. that ‘visitors to the school are suitable and checked and monitored as appropriate, for example external speakers at school assemblies.’ (Ofsted Inspection Handbook para. 174)

Visitors will need to know about:

- the educational framework for collective worship: that it is not an opportunity for evangelism or indoctrination;
- how the school introduces or sets the scene for the ‘worship’ elements of collective worship;
- any particular ‘wording’ that the school adopts for introducing prayers or songs;
- the ages, aptitudes and religious backgrounds of the pupils, so that the language and content is appropriate;
- how this particular act of collective worship fits in with previous sessions;
- practical issues such as:
  - parking arrangements
  - the availability of equipment, such as IWB, sound system etc.
  - the size and make-up of group
  - the time allocation for session
  - whether the school requires visitors to be DBS checked

It is essential that visiting speakers receive a copy of the school policy on collective worship before their visit, and highly recommended that visitors meet with key members of staff before leading an act of worship, to establish school protocols.

**Planning and recording Collective Worship**

Although the idea of planning a two, three or four year rolling programme for collective worship might seem to be an insurmountable obstacle, it can be done fairly easily and can save a great deal of heartache for the future. Planning can also ensure that collective worship is an educational experience and brings together all aspects of the curriculum.

The planning templates included in Appendix A may be useful for devising a broad overview of collective worship within your school, or for adaption. It may be useful to use these for recording as well as planning in case the school needs evidence when faced with a parental complaint. Schools may also wish to take into account the religious calendar or other key world events e.g. Armistice Day, Black History month etc. when planning their assembly cycle.
Schools will also need to be flexible and respond sensitively to current events in the news as they occur.

**Some FAQs:**

- **How long should collective worship be?**
  There is no legislation on this and professional judgment is needed. Many acts of collective worship are too long and labored, which results in pupils becoming restless. An effective act of collective worship could be anything from 3-20 minutes long.

- **Should all the teaching staff be present for collective worship?**
  There has been a tendency, especially in primary schools, to give teachers non-contact time during collective worship. Although this is understandable, it undermines the important aspect of collective worship as being a celebration of the whole school community. Pupils quickly realise when key adults are not present and begin to wonder whether collective worship is an important part of the school day. SACRE’s advice is that all staff who have not withdrawn from collective worship on grounds of conscience should be present for the majority of acts of collective worship.

- **Does having a ‘thought for the day’ with the class teacher or form tutor fulfill the legal requirements of daily collective worship?**
  This very much depends upon the individual leading the ‘thought for the day’. Inconsistency and lack of monitoring seems to be a key criticism of Ofsted on this area in the past. The success or failure of a class based ‘thought for the day’ depends upon whether or not each member of staff feels comfortable in leading an act of collective worship with their class, or whether pupils are able to take the lead with their teacher’s supervision. Also does the event contain the necessary ingredients of collective worship and reflect the legal requirements of “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character”?

- **Does collective worship have to be Christian worship?**
  Since much of the documentation consistently avoids calling school worship ‘Christian’, it is clear that the Law is not intended to be interpreted as such. This being said, it is the advice of SACRE that if school worship consistently avoids reference to the person of Jesus within the spoken or written word then it could not reasonably be defined as ‘mainly Christian’. An inclusive way of doing this might be to use stories from the life of Jesus as examples of expressing, for example, compassion or friendship, allowing pupils opportunity to reflect on what Jesus said or did, within the context of the bigger theme.

- **What should a school policy on collective worship contain?**
  - A statement about what the school considers to be the aims of collective worship and good practice;
  - A statement about right of withdrawal for pupils and teachers, and what the procedure in school is for so doing;
  - A paragraph about the nature of the school population, whether or not pupils from different faiths are present and an indication of those pupils who withdraw from collective worship;
  - A list of resources and where to find them;
  - Planning and evaluation sheets.
Primary Phase:

Example 1 – ‘Working Together’: potential contribution to pupils’ SMSC development:
The theme ‘Working Together’ encourages primary children to:

• remember they do not live in isolation but that the human condition is shared;
• think of others before themselves; (spiritual)
• understand that they have a responsibility towards others;
• discuss ways in which they can promote the common good; (moral)
• consider their own behaviour towards other people;
• appreciate the benefits of co-operation;
• evaluate the impact of shared actions on world events; (social)
• understand that a ‘culture’ of co-operation is preferable to one of conflict;
• become aware of the damaging effect of one culture’s supremacy over others. (cultural)

Age range: Primary

Theme: Working Together

Context: whole school

Resources: a copy of the picture ‘Co-operation is better than conflict’ from the Quaker website

Content:

• Children gather to the strains of the song ‘I’d like to teach the world to sing...’
• The Head teacher engages children with the words, asking what they think the writer of the song hoped for and what the phrase ‘perfect harmony’ means.
• She tells them she has something to show them and reveals the drawing of two struggling donkeys and invites them to talk about it in pairs...
• She gathers their ideas and there is a discussion with the children about what the donkeys learned.

Words for worship: (including prayer, where appropriate)

‘Perhaps you would like to be very quiet for a moment and think about a time when you’ve been like one of those donkeys – when you’ve worked against someone to get your own way; we all behave like that sometimes. Think about what you could have done in that situation and, if you want to, you can say your own prayer, asking God to help you to be less selfish.’

Song for the week:


And for the rest of the week:

Context: a mixture of whole school, classrooms and key stage groups

Tuesday (in classrooms): How can we work together? Story of the hungry stomach; Being like a body (I Corinthians 12);

Wednesday (in key stage groups): Becoming strong together demonstrating with attempts to tear a telephone directory and telling the traditional Jataka story of the birds (Buddhist);

Thursday (in classrooms): When working together made a difference: the story of Rosa Parks and the bus boycott in Atlanta;
Friday (whole school): Making a difference now: the Jubilee ‘Drop the Debt’ campaign and world leaders’ summit.

Example 2 – ‘Threads’: potential contribution to pupils’ SMSC development:

The theme ‘Threads’ encourages children to:
- explore various ‘threads’ as metaphors for relationships;
- understand that they are joined by many threads;
- reflect on the strength of the invisible threads that help to make them who they are;
- think about those people they love, including any who have died (if appropriate); (spiritual)
- remember it is good to think of others and to want to be friendly;
- challenge their thinking about friendship and what it means; (moral)
- understand that relationships bind people together;
- appreciate relational ‘threads’ across generations;
- recognise that everyone in the school belongs together; (social)
- appreciate how ‘threads’ help to cross boundaries of time and culture. (cultural)

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<th>Activity:</th>
<th>Focus:</th>
<th>Words for worship:</th>
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<td>Monday: whole school</td>
<td>Pass a strong thread through</td>
<td>Look at the thread in your hands, joining you to everyone else here; think quietly</td>
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<td>the hands of everyone in the</td>
<td>about the words of the song and the invisible threads that bind us all together.</td>
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<td>hall, encouraging quiet</td>
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<td>concentration on the thread</td>
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<td>itself. Allow time for this</td>
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<td>activity while listening to</td>
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<td>(or singing) an appropriate</td>
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<td>song e.g: ‘Bind us Together’.</td>
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<td>Talk about what the thread</td>
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<td>to be joined by it. Invite</td>
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<td>children to suggest other</td>
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<td>together in school.</td>
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<td>Tuesday: classrooms</td>
<td>Tell the story of a little</td>
<td>I’d like to invite you to think back as far as you can. Think of someone you</td>
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<td>girl who helps her grandmother</td>
<td>love who joins you to the past. If you would like to, say thank you to God for</td>
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<td>to make a quilt. (eg: Flourney</td>
<td>all these memories and the person who helped to create them.</td>
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<td>Y. The Patchwork Quilt Picture</td>
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<td>Puffins ISBN 0 14 050641 1)</td>
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<td>Draw out ideas about the</td>
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<td>threads of a person’s history</td>
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<td>through memory and tradition.</td>
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<td>Wednesday: KS groups</td>
<td>Talk about how we want to</td>
<td>Threads of loving</td>
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<td>remember people we love who</td>
<td>Adam has a prayer to share with us this morning; let’s be quiet and listen:</td>
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<td>have died. Use a story of</td>
<td>‘Please God, look after my Grandad who has just died and my Nana who is sad. Amen.’</td>
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<td>loss to talk about the joy of</td>
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<td>memory as a link to the past</td>
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<td>(e.g. Varley S. Badger’s</td>
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<td>Parting Gift Harper Collins,</td>
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<td>ISBN: 0-688-11518-7) or</td>
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<td>introduce the idea of a quilt</td>
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<td>to help remembering:</td>
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<td>(<a href="http://www.lynnsetterington.co.uk/world-aids-day-quilt">http://www.lynnsetterington.co.uk/world-aids-day-quilt</a>)</td>
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<td>Thursday: classrooms</td>
<td>Talk about friendship bands</td>
<td>Threads of friendship</td>
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<td>and why they are given and</td>
<td>This is to help you remember I want to be your friend. Help me to be your friend.</td>
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<td>worn. Set up an activity in</td>
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<td>which every pupil makes a</td>
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<td>simple band, either of thread</td>
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<td>or card. Invite children to</td>
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<td>sit in a friendship circle</td>
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<td>and put their band onto the</td>
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<td>wrist of the person next to</td>
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<td>them, saying the words for</td>
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<td>worship.</td>
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<td>Friday: whole school</td>
<td>Remind everyone of the thread</td>
<td>Sacred threads</td>
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<td>that joined them all together</td>
<td>A famous priest, John Henry Newman said, ‘I am a link in a chain, a bond of</td>
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<td>on Monday. Talk about the</td>
<td>connections between persons’. Think about how you are a link in a chain.</td>
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<td>idea of a sacred thread,</td>
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<td>joining the person to God</td>
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<td>and show pictures of Hindus</td>
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<td>wearing their sacred threads</td>
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<td>across the chest. Explain</td>
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<td>how they are made and</td>
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<td>Sacred threads.</td>
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invite pupils to think about the three strands of their lives that they would want to plait together if they had such a thread. If you want to, you can think about the threads that join you to God.

Secondary Phase:

Example 1 – ‘Planting for the future’: potential contribution to pupils’ SMSC development:

**Context:** year group gathering once a week and tutor group collective worship on all other days;

The theme ‘Planting for the Future’ encourages secondary pupils to:
- contemplate their own sense of transience in a fleeting world; *(spiritual)*
- reflect on the responsibilities they have as trustees of the future; *(moral)*
- develop a critique of modern society’s reliance on instant gratification; *(social)*
- appreciate there is more to life than money;
- appreciate that both individual and collective responses to issues of culture evolve and change and are often in tension. *(cultural)*

**Photograph of an old olive tree used as focus for each day**

**Monday:** Planting for the future; origins of the Jewish festival of trees, Tu B’Shevat; What do you ‘plant’ for the future?

**Tuesday:** A Personal Memory: The National Trust, founded in 1895 with its oak leaf symbol; Is the past as important as the future? Why? Why are symbols like the leaf important? What do they signify?

**Wednesday:** A Fruitful World: Talmud story of the Rabbi and the old man, planting a fruit tree, even though he would never taste its fruit; How good are you at waiting? What is the best way of thanking the people of the past whom you will never meet?

**Thursday:** Here today, gone tomorrow; if the world were to end tomorrow, what would you do today? Thinking about being responsible to and for others; focusing on ways to serve.

**Friday:** A Legacy: what is the greatest gift you’ve been given? What makes life worth living? What would you like to give to the world for the future? If the world were to end tomorrow, what would you do today? Pupils invited to write their ideas on a leaf shape and pin on a tree image.

**Words for worship** (used every day):
A famous Christian hymn writer, Fred Kaan, asks this question in one of his hymns:

‘...Were the world to end tomorrow
Would we plant a tree today?’

In a moment of silence, think about your response to those words.
Example 2 – ‘Do unto others….’: potential contribution to pupils’ SMSC development:

Context: year group gathering once a week and tutor group collective worship on all other days;

The theme ‘Do unto others…’ encourages secondary pupils to:

- appreciate the universal nature of some religious teaching;
- see the potential benefit of compassion;
- find wisdom in very ordinary ideas;
- imagine they could change the world for the better; (spiritual)
- contemplate the implications and benefits of putting others first;
- challenge their own treatment of people they do not know or like; (moral)
- think critically about their relationships with others;
- realise the importance of empathising with others; (social)
- understand that some teaching crosses religious and cultural boundaries.  (cultural)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material:</th>
<th>Questions:</th>
<th>Words for worship:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday:</strong> One legged wisdom</td>
<td>What would your golden rule be?</td>
<td>Rabbi Hillel also said, “If I am only for myself, what am I?” Stop and ask yourself, If a person is only for her or himself, what is that person doing with life?</td>
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<td>A famous Jewish teacher called Rabbi Hillel was once challenged by a Gentile to sum up the whole of Jewish teaching as set out in the Torah. And to do so while standing on one leg! He replied, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation. Go and learn”. These ancient words have become known as The Golden Rule and they are found in the sacred writings of most religions.</td>
<td>Why are some words so long remembered?</td>
<td>‘A generous heart, kind speech and compassion are the things which renew humanity.’ Saying of the Buddha</td>
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<td><strong>Tuesday:</strong> Wesak</td>
<td>Whose teaching do you follow?</td>
<td>‘One potter has fashioned all the pots. One light pervades all creation.’ Guru Granth Sahib</td>
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<td>For many Buddhists, Wesak is the most important festival of the year. It is the time when they celebrate the life of the Buddha who rejected his wealthy lifestyle to search for the truth about big questions like suffering. When he found his answers he became enlightened. Buddha taught that being kind and generous to others is important; it is good to give hospitality to anyone, whoever they are.</td>
<td>Where do you find answers to really big questions?</td>
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<td><strong>Weds:</strong> Loving the enemy</td>
<td>What does this story tell you about what a ‘true Sikh’ might be?</td>
<td>‘A new commandment I give to you,” he said to them, “that you love one another as I have loved you.” To show what he meant, Jesus had already washed their feet like a servant. They did not understand but they realised something was going to change. “By this,” he went on, “people will know you are my disciples.” And that would be important one day...</td>
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<td>The Guru led a strong army in battle and when the fighting was over, there were many dead and injured on the battlefield. The Guru sent a group of his men out to tend the injured. As he watched, he saw Bhai Ghanaya, a water carrier, tending enemy soldiers as well as his own. He summoned him and demanded to know what he was doing. Bhai Ghanaya answered, “Master, when I gave out water I did not see friends or enemies. I saw only the wounded.” The Guru was deeply moved by these words and told him he was indeed a true Sikh.</td>
<td>One potter has fashioned all the pots. One light pervades all creation.’ Guru Granth Sahib</td>
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<td><strong>Thursday:</strong> Love one another</td>
<td>How do people know who you are?</td>
<td>Jesus taught, “Love one another as I have loved you...”</td>
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<td>On the night before he was killed, Jesus had a farewell meal with his friends. He showed them how they were to remember him and gave them new rules for living. “A new commandment I give to you,” he said to them, “that you love one another as I have loved you.” To show what he meant, Jesus had already washed their feet like a servant. They did not understand but they realised something was going to change. “By this,” he went on, “people will know you are my disciples.” And that would be important one day...</td>
<td>How would you like to be remembered?</td>
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<td>The first person to formulate what we call the Golden Rule was probably the Chinese sage Confucius, 2500 years ago. When asked what his followers should practise he gave them the instruction: ‘Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.’ This idea, more often a positive statement, is at the heart of all these religious stories. It is wisdom that has survived the centuries and it is the essence of compassion. It is not exclusively a religious idea however. It is shared by many people all over the world. Just think how wonderful it would be if absolutely everyone were really compassionate...</td>
<td>What could you learn about yourself from these religious stories?</td>
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<td>What could you learn about yourself from these religious stories?</td>
<td>How could you change the world?</td>
<td>Always do to others as you would like them to do to you... Be quiet for a moment and think what those words mean to you. You can make your thoughts into a prayer if you want to.</td>
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Time to Reflect:

Appendix A

Planning Templates
## Long Term Plan

### Rolling Programme for Collective Worship

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autumn</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
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<td><strong>Main Theme:</strong></td>
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### Main Theme:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Led by</th>
<th>Focus/Theme</th>
<th>Method/Means</th>
<th>Pupil Participation</th>
<th>Prayer/Reflection / 'Words for worship'</th>
<th>Song/Music</th>
<th>Other Information</th>
<th>Comment/Evaluation</th>
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## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP: PLANNING/MONITORING SHEET

**Theme for Week:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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