

## **Burnsall VA Primary School: Policy for Acts of Collective Worship**

Policy completed: April 2014

Co-ordinator responsible: Julie Morton Lee

Date of next review: April 2017



### **Rationale**

Our daily act of collective worship is a special and distinctive time of our school day. Burnsall School is an educational community not a faith community. Therefore we do not celebrate corporate worship which assumes a group of believers but collective worship which means we gather together and provide the opportunity for worship to take place. We do not assume participants will have any particular beliefs or make particular responses.

We understand collective worship to be educationally valid and inclusive. Our school worship gives us an opportunity to look within and beyond ourselves and some of us might encounter God. It is an occasion which allows space for worship to take place but allows other responses from participants.

An act of worship is an important part of our whole curriculum which empowers children to be open to life, feelings, celebrations, values and visions.

### **Legal Framework**

The aim of a daily act of collective worship, according to 1993 Education Act is to “provide an opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs.” Our collective worship reflects the Church of England foundation of the school. It can take place at any time of the day and involve a variety of groupings. Each term worship will take place in ST Wilfrid’s Church.

### **Parents right to Withdraw**

Parents have the legal right to withdraw children from worship and parents are made aware of this right. The Governors do expect that in choosing Burnsall School, parents will support their children in taking part in all the religious activities of our school, including a daily act of worship.

### **Teachers Rights**

Appointed teachers should be sympathetic to the aims of the school and therefore should be willing to fully participate in school worship.

### **Aims of our school worship**

From the Christian perspective of the schools foundation the aims of our school worship are:

- To be educationally worthwhile
- To respect all of those who participate

- To be inclusive allowing all to contribute whatever their personal commitment.
- To be appropriate to the needs of the children
- To contribute to R.E
- To contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the children
- To reflect the Christian Foundation of the School

### **Objectives**

To give the opportunity:

- To give children spiritual dimension to life and personal values
- For a sense of group identity,(class, key stage or school)
- To experience an activity of specialness which is different from any other activity in the school hall.
- For others to join our school community
- To enable children to explore their own beliefs and values

Worship should develop each persons understanding of themselves and the world around them and may be;

- An individual response to God
- An awareness of beauty and goodness
- A sense of awe and wonder
- Feelings of sorrow or regret
- Praise or thanksgiving
- Reflection or prayer
- A celebration about things we care about/special occasion
- Thinking together about things of concern
- Sharing thoughts, ideas or class activities
- Sharing experiences of living in and responding to the world around us
- A deepening of religious understanding
- An opportunity for participation
- About worth

Worship Co-ordinator – Julie Morton Lee

Role

- To ensure legal requirements are fulfilled
- To co-ordinate the provision of a daily act of worship
- To regularly evaluate the acts of worship in school
- To support staff and other providers
- To organise and maintain resources for worship
- To keep up to date on worship issues
- To liaise with visitors and involve in the planning process

## Policy into practice

Acts of worship should be:

- **Inclusive** and therefore child centred. They should relate to children's experiences, be relevant to children's concerns and should involve children as active participants. Acts of worship should foster a sense of community, shared values, identity and purpose.
- **Educational** and therefore learning experiences of real quality. Acts of worship should be prepared, delivered resourced and evaluated. School records of our acts of worship will be kept. There is a partnership between the content and conduct of school worship and the ethos of our school.
- **Spiritual** and therefore a special time where an atmosphere conducive to worship is created. Pupils should feel relaxed, secure and calm. Spiritual development can be fed through words, music, images and atmosphere.
- **Planning for worship** Themes will be chosen at the beginning of the term. This planning will be flexible enough to allow for sudden events, disasters, celebrations and sadness and joy in our community. They will be closely linked to Christian values but remain broadly Christian.

## Organisation

All children should take part in an act of worship each day.

Sometimes our Acts of Worship may be held off the school premises

The length of worship will normally not be more than 20 minutes in length.

There is also a quiet place in the Dormitory for private worship

## Planning

What is the theme?

What is the aim?

How will you introduce the idea?

Will there be a prayer or reflection time?

Are hymns or songs needed?

What resources do you need?

Do participants need to be prepared?

How will you seat the children?

Can the children be involved in the planning/lead the worship

## Evaluation

Leaders will informally evaluate acts of worship.

Headteacher, other teachers and governors may formally evaluate our Act of Worship.

Children will evaluate each theme.

## Skills which can be developed

5 c skills

Communication – listening, talking,

Co-operation, consideration, courtesy – sharing, respecting others, making choices, understanding silence, reflecting, analysing,  
Concentration – learning about others, understanding of worship, understanding religious beliefs.

### **Teacher's role**

Acts of Worship are essentially shared experiences for our school community. Teachers should normally be part of that experience to help the children get the most from it i.e. teachers will be able to respond to questions later. Teachers' presence values the activity. All teachers should lead Acts of Worship.

### **Class based worships**

In a small group children are able to participate, express feelings and the needs and ages of the children are more easily addressed. Leaders are more likely to be able to link worship with class experiences and should include time for thinking, listening and stillness. It may be more appropriate to consider difficult concepts such as death, in the warm supportive atmosphere of the child's own classroom.

### **Preparation for the hall/Dormitory/outside**

Physical surroundings are important in creating the right atmosphere for Acts of Worship. Children may sit in a circle, square horseshoe or anywhere. The usual arrangement is for the children to sit in rows.

### **Focal point**

Could be : flowers, candle, thought, object, symbols, picture, sculpture, phrase, powerpoint presentation

### **Approaches to Worship**

Presentation/ expression of worship may include

Story	drama	candles	prayer	flowers
religious readings		artefacts	video	songs/hymns
dance	art	poetry	sharing food	reflection
experiences	aspect of school		natural materials	
celebration of festivals				

This list is not exhaustive

### **Story**

The use of story is a powerful tool and may be perceived at different levels by those involved. Story can;

- Raise awareness
- Set the scene outside the children's realm of experience
- Increase the children understanding of themselves
- Enlarge their perspectives of the world
- Increase empathy
- Increase knowledge and understanding
- Demonstrate joys and difficulties of life children have not experienced
- Provide insights in to the lives of others

- Pose moral questions
- Develop language and listening skills

**Prayer/reflection/directed silence**

Children should be invited to listen or think about prayer. It is important not to exclude anyone. Prayers should be appropriate, may be expressed by the children, may be silent, may be musical.

**Music**

Adds an extra dimension to worship and can help create an appropriate atmosphere. Music can help the children to be involved. Children can respond physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually. Not every act of worship will have a song.

**Other religions and Christianity as a world religion**

This content could be enriched by using different cultural and religious traditions. Using multi faith materials will help children to recognise and respect, reflect on and respond to our multi faith society in which we live.

<b>Burnsall VA Primary School- Collective Worship Evaluation</b>
Name

Date
Led by
Theme/title
Was the children's attention engaged and involved?
Were children/adults involved in the activity?
Give a brief description of what took place
What elements formed the structure of the occasion and were they helpful/appropriate (music, song, prayer, reflection etc)
Your lasting impression
Any further thought/areas for development