

## GRANBY COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

### **1 Aims and purpose**

#### **1.1** The aims and purpose of collective worship are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship God;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to enable children to explore their own beliefs;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to develop in children a sense of community spirit;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship.

**1.2** Collective Worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered, and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values and reinforce positive attitudes.

*From DFE Circular 1/94 Religious Education & Collective Worship*

### **The Nature & Character of the School**

We believe that integrity in collective worship is only maintained when the family backgrounds of the pupils in our school are taken into consideration. Granby Primary has a very small population of ethnic minority children "belonging to" with various levels of understanding and commitment, Islam, Hinduism Sikhism and Judaism. Not all of these children will have experienced the faith or worship of these religions. For most it will be the cultural rather than the religious customs with which they will be most familiar. This has its counterpart in the rest of the school community, where a majority of families describe themselves as Christian, but without any allegiance to a worshipping community. A large number of families describe themselves as having no religion.

## The Role of Collective Worship

We understand worship to be a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in an assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in the assembly.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our assemblies on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our assemblies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and the wider community.

Collective Worship and Religious Education are distinct, as is Collective Worship and assemblies.

Whilst there are no legal requirements for schools to hold assemblies (assemblies can be gatherings of people without any clear spiritual content) the law clearly states that all pupils (see Right of Withdrawals for exceptions) are required to take part in a daily act of collective worship.

As it is commonly used and understood, the term worship applies to the activities of a faith community, rather than a school. Worship within a faith community (corporate worship) pre-supposes a sharing of a commitment to the same faith, expressed in similar ways of worshipping. The same assumptions cannot be made in relation to the worship of the school community (collective worship). Those gathered will come from a variety of faith and non-faith backgrounds. This means that the worship of a school community is in essence different from the worship of a faith community.

Collective worship occupies an important place in the life of Granby. It provides an opportunity for members of the school community to pause from activity, to gather together, to remind themselves of and to reflect upon the beliefs and values which bind the school community together.

## Worship in an Educational Context

We see the concept of worship as providing an invaluable opportunity for the school community to focus and re-affirm those values which are considered to be of supreme worth and importance. Values which are regularly revisited as themes for collective worship include care, co-operation, commitment, courage, honesty, forgiveness, friendship, loyalty, respect, responsibility, sacrifice and self-worth.

We believe that our times of collective worship can play an important role in deepening the spiritual awareness of our pupils. Collective worship provides pupils with an opportunity to reflect upon the value, purpose and meaning of things. It provides an experience of quietness to counterbalance the busy activity that marks the rest of the school day. Such quiet times will often lend themselves to the nurturing of a sense of awe and wonder, especially with regard to the natural world. Through collective worship we encourage the children to recognise the widely held belief in the existence of a deity. It gives pupils the opportunity to hear stories and words from religious and other literature and we consider values which are shared by different faiths.

In addition, special times of collective worship are planned in the school year to acknowledge the significance of key religious festivals from the main religions represented in school. In line with legislation, that collective worship should be "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character" we place particular emphasis on the Christian festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

However, it is important to note that whether we are dealing with Ramadan, Diwali or Pesach, our concern is always to explore the reasons for celebration. Pupils are not required to "celebrate" religious beliefs, which neither they nor their families adhere to.

At Granby we believe that collective worship makes a vital contribution to the development of pupils in the following areas.

1. Collective worship contributes to the moral development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:
  - Reflect on matters concerning right and wrong.
  - Hear about incidents in which, and people in whom goodness or right are exemplified.

- Learn about religions and other teachings concerning right and wrong.
2. Collective worship contributes to the social development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:
    - Gather with others for a common purpose.
    - Share times of joy/sadness and success with others.
    - Learn how to behave appropriately within a specific social setting.
    - Increase self-confidence in public speaking or dramatic performance.
  3. Collective worship contributes to the cultural development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:
    - Hear and respond to music from a range of tunes, places and cultures.
    - Reflect upon ideas concerning the concept of beauty.
    - Appreciate a range of talents formed within the school community and beyond.
  4. Collective worship contributes to the intellectual development of pupils by providing them with an opportunity to:
    - Learn and to engage with their minds.
    - Have ideas concerning values confirmed or challenged.
    - Consider the power of words.
  5. Collective worship contributes to the spiritual development by providing:
    - A breathing space in the busy whirl of the school activity.
    - To be still and reflect, to refresh the spirit.
    - Opportunities to consider questions and responses to belief in God.

Silence can be a powerful way of encouraging pupils in awareness of the spiritual, especially to mark bereavement and Armistice Day. Opportunities for questions and reflection offer pupils the space to develop their own response to tragedy and the spiritual.
  6. Collective worship contributes to the development of pupils PHSE & Citizenship skills.

## **Arrangements for Acts of Collective Worship**

Key Stage 1 assemblies take place Monday to Thursday from 9.00am to 9.15am in the lower hall.

Monday - Led by Mr Fowler.

Tuesday - Celebration and Birthday Assembly. Led by Mr Lewis.

Wednesday - Assembly in the classroom.

Thursday - Story with a moral Assembly.

Friday - School Celebration Assembly led by Mr Fowler. (See KS2 for details)

During the year, Nursery and Reception join in with these assemblies as soon as it is deemed appropriate.

Key Stage 2 assemblies take place on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10.40am to 11.00am in the upper hall.

Tuesday - Alternating Singing then Certificates Assembly

Thursday - Class Assemblies or SMSC Assembly

Friday - School Celebration Assembly led by Mr Fowler. (Alternating weeks Foundation Stage to Year 4 inclusive, then Year 2 to Year 6 inclusive)

Once a term there is a Whole School Assembly in the upper hall at 10.40am

On any days when assemblies don't take place there is a short period of collective quiet reflection in each classroom.

## **Principles & Practicalities**

Our main consideration is that an assembly is properly prepared, presented and evaluated.

- i. Variety in presentation  
Videos, recordings & tapes & CD's, drama (rehearsed and spontaneous), stories & poetry, music, dance, religious & other artefacts, photographs, pictures & posters are all used to aid delivery.
- ii. Good timing is important, especially with the increasing demands of the curriculum. Assembly should not exceed 20 minutes.
- iii. Phrasing - We phrase statements carefully. Rather than say "we believe", it is more appropriate to say "Christians believe" or "Hindus believe".

It is expected that children will enter and sit quietly and calmly, and wait for assembly to begin, listening to the music being played.

### **Visitors**

Sometimes visitors contribute to or lead collective worship, particularly at Harvest and more so at KS2.

### **Right of Withdrawal**

We expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Teachers can also exercise their right to withdraw from leading or attending acts of collective worship, but attending "assemblies" is part of a teachers contractual duties.

### **Suggested Topics/Themes**

Possible themes are endless and at Granby are often tied in with curriculum topics for maximum effect. Some suggestions are:

- Belonging
- Care
- Commitment
- Co-operation
- Courage
- Families
- Festivals
- Forgiveness
- Friends/Friendship
- Gifts
- Hands
- Home
- Honesty
- Light
- Loyalty

- Myself
- New life
- People who help us
- Pets
- Places of worship
- Religious leaders
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Rules
- Sacrifice
- Saints
- Secrets
- Self worth
- Stories Jesus told
- Water

## Appendix 1

### A CALENDAR OF NOTABLE EVENTS

#### Autumn Term - Religious

**Rosh Hashanah** - New Year, creation, repentance

**Navaratri/Durga Puja** - of Rama, triumph of good over evil, Hindu Goddesses

**Harvest Festival** - Food, thanksgiving, bread, the elements, life, death, farmers, famine

**Yom Kippur** - Repentance, new year, fasting, new year resolutions

**Sukkot** - Harvest, homes, journeys, signs & symbols of Judaism, the elements, special meals

**Simchat Torah** - New beginnings, special books, synagogue, signs &

symbols of Judaism

**Birthday of Muhammad** - Birthdays, teachers, journeys, thanksgiving, deserts, pilgrimage, signs & symbols of Islam

**Interfaith Week of prayer for world peace**

**Diwali** - Stories of Rama & Sita, light, triumph of good over evil, gifts & giving, light & darkness, signs & symbols of Hinduism

**All Saints (All Hallows)** - Thanksgiving, spiritual leaders

**All Souls** - Remembering, death, loss, grief, thanksgiving

**Ramadan** - Fasting, self denial, rules and behaviour, prayer, the mosque, light & darkness

**Remembrance Day** - Memories, thanksgiving, war and peace, forgiveness

**Birthday of Guru Nanak** - Special books, spiritual leaders, birthdays, special meals, teachers, signs & symbols of Sikhism

**St Andrew** - Special people, saints, missionaries

**St Nicholas** - Giving, caring, receiving, saints

**Advent** - Preparations for special events, darkness, light, babies

**Hanukah** - Places of worship, triumph of good over evil, light, thanksgiving

**Christmas** - Birthdays, babies, gifts and giving, special meals, families, naming ceremonies, joy

### Autumn Term - Non Religious

**New School Year** - Beginnings, friends, learning, rules and behaviour

## Spring Term - Religious

**Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh** - Birthdays, spiritual leaders, special books, signs & symbols of Sikhism

**Orthodox Christmas** - Birthdays, babies, gifts & giving, families, joy

**Epiphany** - Travellers, gifts & giving, stars, journeys

**Candlemas** - Giving, receiving, light/darkness

**Night of the Journey & Ascension** - Journeys, prayer, Islamic rules & behaviour

**Chinese New Year**

**St Valentine** - Caring, friendship, giving and receiving

**Shrove Tuesday** - Repentance, preparation, Mardi Gras

**Ash Wednesday** - Humanity, symbolism of the cross

**Lent** - Self-denial, sadness, preparation, fasting

**St David's Day** - Thanksgiving, spiritual leaders, saints

**Women's World Day of Prayer**

**St Patrick** - Prisoners of conscience, spiritual leaders, missionaries

**Mothering Sunday** - Mothers, families, gifts and giving

**Rama's Birth** - Babies, stories of the childhood of Rama, cradles

**Pesach** - Exodus story, Seder meal, symbolism of Seder foods, families, spring cleaning

**Passion Sunday** - Suffering, Jesus, sorrow

**Palm Sunday** - Triumph, joy, symbolism of palm and cross in Christianity.

**Holy Week** - Stories of the last week of Jesus' life, sadness, remembrance

**Maundy Thursday** - The story of the Eucharist at the last supper, cleansing, humility

**Good Friday** - self sacrifice, suffering, death, symbolism of the cross

**Holy Saturday** - Light, candles, baptism, promises

**Easter Day** - New life, joy, eggs, light, Easter story

**Holocaust Day** - Remembrance, death, pain, suffering, injustice

**St George** - Saints, legends of St George, martyrs

**Eid-UI-Fitr** - Feasts and special meals, joy, the mosque, charity, gifts & giving, new clothes

### Summer Term - Religious

**Christian Aid Week** - Prayer, third world, helping, poverty

**Ascension Day** - Jesus, new life, loss & change, fulfilment

**Shavuot** - Torah, laws, sacred books, harvest, synagogue, special meals

**Pentecost, Whitsuntide** - Jesus, spiritual leaders, gifts, baptism, apostles

**Eid-UI-Adha** - Pilgrimage, sacrifice, poor, gifts, almsgiving

**Al Hijra** - Journeys, religious communities, gifts, stories of Muhammad

**Raksha Bandhan** - Families, brothers, sisters, triumph of goodness over evil, gifts, signs & symbols of Hinduism

**St Swithin's Day** - Saints, water, weather, folk tales, seasons