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Elsworth CE (A) Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

‘...act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God’
Micah 6:8(b)

Aims and purpose

At Elsworth C of E Primary School, we are committed to providing high quality daily acts of Collective Worship which enable all members of our school community to:

- Engage in an act of community.
- Express praise and thanksgiving to God.
- Be still and reflect.
- Explore the big questions of life and respond to national events.
- Foster respect and deepen spiritual awareness.
- Reflect on the character of God and on the teachings of Christ.
- Affirm Christian values and attitudes.
- Share each other's joys and challenges.
- Celebrate special times in the Christian calendar.

Collective Worship

Collective worship is a special time at Elsworth C of E Primary school where we come together in smaller groups or as a whole community to 'encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.' (Collective worship in Church of England Schools).

Collective Worship at Elsworth is inclusive; everyone is able to reflect on the themes and stories and how they relate to their lives and beliefs but there is no expectation of particular beliefs or standpoints. Children are invited to take part in practical ways through: setting up the hall, leading collective worship, joining in drama activities, leading parts of the worship (our gather and send or reading prayers) and joining together in sung worship. It is invitational, inviting all members to participate in ways that they feel comfortable with no requirement to participate if they do not wish to. It is inspirational; asking meaningful and deep questions that encourage reflection upon faith, beliefs and philosophical viewpoints. It is reflective; offering space each day for children to reflect on their own beliefs and how they choose to act towards one another. Collective Worship at Elsworth is varied and interesting.

As a Church of England Voluntary Aided School, we base our worship on the teachings of Christ and the traditions of the Christian Church.

Organisation of Collective Worship

We hold a daily act of Collective Worship that may be whole school, separate key stages or within classes. Typically, Collective Worship will be as follows:

Monday	Key Stage Collective worship led by Mrs Bennett (headteacher)
Tuesday	Class Collective Worship led by the class teacher
Wednesday	Choral worship in Key stages led by class teachers
Thursday	Whole school Clergy Collective Worship
Friday	Whole school celebration Collective Worship

We conduct Collective Worship in a dignified and respectful way. Children know that Collective Worship is a period of calm reflection. It is regarded as a special time and we expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful, to listen carefully to the teachings, and invite all pupils to participate in prayer and songs if they would like to. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and candles or other objects and symbols that act as a focal point for the attention of the children during worship.

Collective Worship is normally conducted by the headteacher, local clergy, other members of the teaching staff or another visitor.

Collective Worship is organised and planned in a number of different ways in order to allow all members to have the opportunity to engage with the teachings of the Bible. Sometimes, collective worship follows a theme and we look at texts from the Bible that follow this theme. At other times, Collective Worship follows the story of the whole Bible through a Bible overview. When going through the whole Bible in this way, children are invited to consider how that particular text / story fits into the Bible's message as a whole and reflect upon the Christian values that are seen within it.

At the heart of our Collective Worship is our Bible verse, Micah 6:8(b) 'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.' Key questions are used within Collective Worship to enable all to engage with their own faith and beliefs and whether these have changed. Our key questions are:

- What does this teach me about (the Christian belief in) God?
- What does this teach me about people?
- Is there something that surprises me?
- Do I have any questions?
- How might this change the way I choose to act?
- How does this change the way I think?
- How does this change the way I feel?

Each Collective Worship is structured to enable all to feel welcome, included and enable everyone to focus. Members of the school community will enter the space calmly and quietly music will be playing either to sing along to or to listen to. The class candle(s) are lit as a focal point and all are welcomed in. A member of the school community brings those present together using the words of our gather:

'Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can quench.'

The Bible story is introduced and engaged with through: drama, questions, videos and readings.

Members are invited to join together in choral worship. These songs are chosen to relate to the Bible verse or to the Christian calendar.

Members are invited to reflect on the things that they have heard through prayers. These prayers are often those written by children, our school prayer or other prayers as appropriate.

The Collective Worship is drawn together at the end using our words of 'sending out':

‘We are sent out to love and serve one another and to make a difference in the world.’

We also observe festivals and mark the events of the Christian calendar. A Collective Worship for the whole school community is held at our local church for:

- Harvest service
- Remembrance service (with the ‘planting’ of the poppies around the memorial)
- Christmas service
- Easter service

At Easter we have a special Collective Worship around the whole school site re-telling the story of Jesus’ last days through a ‘Passion Play’. Children are invited to take part in this or observe as adults read out excerpts of scripture.

We invite the children to participate in Collective Worship in a number of different ways including writing and leading prayers, leading the ‘gather’ and ‘send’, acting during Bible stories, recording the themes and content of our worship, organising the space and music and celebrating their achievements thus promoting the ethos of the school.

We welcome governors’ attendance at our Collective Worship at any time.

4 Right of withdrawal

We expect all children to attend Collective Worship. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the Collective Worship. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act. Parents wishing to withdraw their child(ren) from Collective Worship must meet with the headteacher or put the request into writing addressed to the headteacher so that all staff can be made aware.

The headteacher keeps a record of all children who have been withdrawn from Collective Worship.

5 Monitoring and review

A record of Collective Worship is kept by the Year 6 Worship Leaders. Pupils may also be asked their opinion of Collective Worship through the school and class councils. It is the responsibility of the Learning and Standards Committee to monitor the policy and practice of Collective Worship.