

RIPLEY ST THOMAS

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY



Collective Prayer and Worship Policy

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Believe.....

Collective Prayer and Worship Policy

As a Church of England Academy with a rich Christian life, Worship and Prayer is at the heart of the daily life of Ripley St. Thomas. Worship of God is an act which is to God, for God and about God so that people may meet with a real and living God. This can be seen as 'In Spirit and in Truth' meaning that what we sing, pray and talk about in our collective times of worship needs to be matched and followed up by our actions.

Prayer and Worship in school may be as simple as reading a prayer or allowing time to reflect, that may only last a minute or two. Or it may involve leading a form or year group in something during tutorial, morning assembly, chapel or even the whole school at the end of term services.

Worship can take place anywhere: the classroom, outdoors, and in our actions wherever we may be. We are particularly privileged to have a beautiful chapel. This space creates a place within the school for pupils and staff. It is very much part of the everyday life of Ripley and used every day for collective worship for different year groups. It is available before and after school and during lunch-time for private reflection. It is also available during lesson times and tutorials for the use of classes for worship. We also have a small outdoor chapel by the canal to enhance our experience of worship and this provides an alternative space for reflection. We hold a number of other services, such as staff communion and services of celebration, at different times in the Christian calendar.

Whilst the School Chaplain, Michael Reynolds, is responsible for overseeing worship at Ripley, all are part of the worshiping community that is Ripley and as such all staff and pupils are encouraged to take part and be involved in leading worship. The importance of worship being led and modelled by peers is as powerful as the act itself, as it speaks of God bringing us into the fullness of life.

Through our actions mirroring our worship we seek to develop the same love, respect, tolerance and care of each individual as exemplified by Jesus Himself. This knows no bounds.

Parents have the right to request that their child is withdrawn from worship. However, in view of the religious foundation of the school and the centrality of the Christian faith in all that we do and how it drives our ethos, vision and values, the Governors would be extremely concerned if any parent expressed this wish.

Statement of Aims

Worship is wholly Christian and mainly, though not exclusively, Anglican in character. It will aim to develop pupils spiritually so that they know and meet with a real and living God:

- learning to communicate with God through prayer
- learning to be still with God and able to be reflective
- learning to see God in this community and wherever they may be
- increase our collective and personal knowledge of God
- understand what worship is and what people do when they worship
- develop a sense of awe and wonder at creation
- explore the mystery and the important questions about life and creation, including suffering, loss, death, evil, etc.
- explore that which is of value in life – truth, love, goodness, beauty etc

Help pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, so that they:

- learn about the place and significance of the Bible, Church life and Christian practice
- experience different forms of worship
- celebrate the festivals and Saints days of the church year
- begin to understand the nature of God as revealed in Jesus and the significance of Jesus in their lives
- understand that God is concerned with all areas of life, big and small.

Contribute to the general development of pupils by:

- providing them with the opportunities for Christian leadership
- exploring moral issues and concerns and the process of decision making with regard to morality
- helping pupils to reflect on their own values, commitments and beliefs
- helping pupils to reflect on the news and current affairs
- helping pupils to be aware of the needs of others

Appreciate, celebrate and take note of the life of the school by:

- celebrating work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum
- building up the sense of community of the school
- developing and reflecting on the values of the school
- sharing the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the school community.

Content of the Acts of Worship

In general, worship will include one or more of the following: a hymn, prayer, Bible reading, homily, music, drama, dance. Each of these may be related to one or more of the following:

- **Elements of faith:** understanding the Bible, Old Testament stories, stories about the teaching of Jesus, Church history, Church seasons, festivals and beliefs
- **Prayer and God:** exploring ideas about God and prayer
- **Variety in Prayer:** adoration, confession, thanksgiving and personal supplication and intercession for others; meditation and reflection
- **Topical events:** crises and continuing issues, such as Third World needs, wealth and poverty
- **Stories** which illustrate faith themes, e.g. awe and wonder, love, compassion, myths and legends, literature and children's literature, stories which explore metaphor, truth bearing stories
- **Sharing and taking note of experiences of others,** and expressing concern for others, both in school and in the news
- **Encouraging the Ministry of Giving:** support for a variety of charities, especially those with a Christian foundation; community gifts to the elderly and nearby local and national charities.
- **Exploring common values, standards and rules:** how to treat others, self-discipline, good and evil, understand that Christian values are perfectly embodied in the person of Christ

- **Sharing common experiences:** loss, anger, thankfulness, sorrow, joy, fear, jealousy, beauty
- **Music:** hymns and songs from the Christian tradition, Taize chants for meditative worship etc. to reflect the variety of music used to enhance the worship of God.
- **Sharing communion.**

Structures and Support

It is important to differentiate between worship and assembly. Worship is explicitly about God, not just a Christian or bible quote in a wider message or talk. Our acts of worship should stand alone and not be diluted by notices.

Collective worship is held in the chapel all year and in form every week. Worship is led by a variety of people; the Chaplain produces a rota staffed by himself, SLT, student bodies within the school and a number of volunteers. Outside speakers are often invited to lead worship.

Form tutors are expected to manage one act of corporate worship per week in form time. This is in addition to reading the daily prayer. Resources are provided for all tutors by the Chaplain however many form tutors develop their own worship programmes and some facilitate the young people to lead the class themselves. This is supported and resourced by the Chaplain and Progress Leaders.

Every day a prayer is provided on the daily bulletin. All pupils end the day with the Grace.

It is recognised that to be effective acts of collective worship require a comfortable and stimulating environment conducive, for example, to quiet reflection and contemplative activities. The material, ideas, etc. need to be relevant to the world of young people, appropriate to their level of understanding, their degree of faith and to their experiences.

It is also recognised that staff and pupils who lead the acts of worship require support, including induction for new staff, in-service training for all staff and resources that are meaningful, varied and readily available.

The following support is available:

- Musical support from the Music Department who are happy to advise and contribute.
- ICT support from our technician team.
- Resources for staff, including a Bible for all form tutors, readily available prayers, a staff library resourced with assembly books, sketches, themes and ideas.
- Visible symbols in keeping with our status as a Church School. For example, there are crosses in each classroom and the 'Mission Statement' and artefacts that can serve as a focus for worship are visible in classrooms and about the school.
- A daily prayer is published on the bulletin.
- Resources for weekly form worship can be found on the shared files.

The School Chaplain is always willing and able to support staff in delivering both year and form worship.