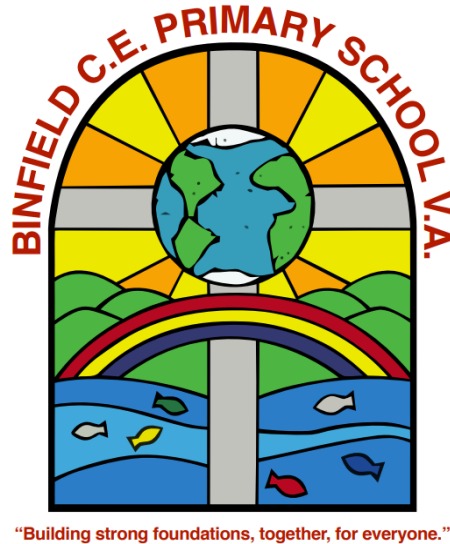


Binfield C.E. Primary School (V.A.)



Collective Worship (Assembly) Policy

Revised June 2026
To be reviewed May 2028

Introduction

Collective worship is central to the life of Binfield C.E. Primary School. Worship offers the pupils and others in our school an opportunity to reflect on values and issues in the context of our Christian vision and ethos. It is an expression of our vision and shapes our approach to others and to what we do in school. We warmly invite all members of our school community to join our worship.

Our collective worship provides pupils and staff, no matter what their beliefs/or non- beliefs the opportunity to:

- Celebrate -
 - Christian seasons and festivals;
 - school values associated with our vision;
 - Pupils' and adults' achievements;
- experience prayer, stillness, worship and reflection

- grow in understanding of and participation in prayer;
- create a reflective approach to life including the exploration of deep questions
- develop as a community centred on our clear and distinctive Christian vision
- experience a variety of styles of worship;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship;
- feel safe and affirmed;
- worship God on their own terms if they so wish.

Worship will reflect aspects of the curriculum and in particular will:

- nurture spiritual growth;
- enable participants to consider moral questions in a Christian context;
- enhance social understanding and encourage responses to issues through courageous advocacy;
- give participants a chance to reflect on the place and importance of faith in the lives of people today;
- encourage participants to explore beliefs drawn from their own cultural heritage;
- reflect the teachings of Jesus and a trinitarian theology.

The Pattern of Collective Worship

Collective worship takes place in a variety of groupings, in the school hall, in classrooms and on occasions outside. Please see Appendix 1 for a typical pattern of worship in our school. On occasions worship takes place in the *church* – we visit All Saints Church, Binfield and Newbold Church, Binfield. We follow the seasons of the Church year and within these significant festivals and other special days are observed. These always include Harvest, Christmas and Easter and other days are celebrated occasionally. Other important days in the calendar such as Remembrance and the Leavers’ Service also feature in collective worship.

Whenever worship takes place it is planned to promote participants’ thinking beyond the time given to worship itself.

Leading worship

Worship has a variety of leaders from both within school and from the local Church Community. Great care is taken to ensure that worship is Invitational, Inclusive and Inspiring. For example, if a Christian belief is being explored, the leader may say: “Christians believe” they should not say, “We believe.” Pupils are given opportunities to lead worship throughout the year too. Visitors are welcome to contribute to collective worship from time to time and are given guidance from our worship policy. Leaders from faiths within the area help us to increase the pupils’ awareness, promote respect and raise the esteem of the pupils who belong to these faiths.

Planning Acts of Collective Worship

Our acts of worship are carefully planned to ensure a balance between content and experience. Leaders, including the children, plan the content and activities included in worship according to what is most appropriate to the season/theme and the needs of the pupils. Please see Appendix 1 and 3 for more information. The themes of worship are chosen to both express and explore our vision and the way in which this vision is experienced in school through the associated values. Throughout their time at our school children will encounter a wide variety of activities such as drama, alongside more traditional elements of worship such as prayer and song. We will also introduce pupils to a range of approaches to worship.

Prayer is a vital part of our worship. It is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate i.e. *'I am going to say a prayer. If you would like to join in and make it your own prayer, you can say Amen at the end. If you don't want to join in, please sit quietly and have your own thoughts about today's assembly.'* Our prayers are addressed to God reflecting the traditions and practices of the Church of England. Pupils who prefer not to pray are encouraged to use these times to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship. Please see Appendix 2 for further information.

Our worship is regularly reviewed through discussions with participants, observation and reflection. and our evaluations are fed into the planning for future worship.

A legal note

By law, Collective Worship must:

- be provided for every child every day;
- reflect the school's Trust Deed.

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational, inclusive and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship. In the first instance we ask parents who may wish to exercise this right to visit school to speak with the headteacher.

Appendix 1. A typical pattern of worship

A typical pattern of worship

A typical pattern of worship over the week looks like this:

Monday	Whole school (Focused on a theme/value)	Led by visiting clergy or SLT
Tuesday	KS Singing/praise assembly or KS Team assembly (following up on the theme)	Led by DHT & Music lead Team leaders/teachers
Wednesday	Sharing assembly (Focussed on sharing the learning in the Year group including RE and SMSC) or Class/Year group assembly	Led by Year group (Chn) (Parents invited) Rota of teachers within each team (arranged by A. Head)
Thursday	KS Singing/praise assembly or KS Team assembly (following up on the theme)	Led by DHT & Music lead Team leaders/teachers
Friday	Celebration achievement assembly (Focussed on identifying and celebrating the individual talents and achievements of the children and the Christian attitudes and behaviours towards others e.g. manners; compassion; empathy; patience; tolerance etc.	Led by SLT (Parents invited)

We also stop to say a **lunchtime prayer** and a **prayer at the end of the day**.

Pattern of worship over the year

In addition, we celebrate the **Christian seasons and festivals** throughout the year.

The Christian seasons

Liturgical year - an overview (taken from the Church of England's website)

The annual cycle of the Christian year allows us to commemorate the life and ministry of Christ, to celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit which led to the foundation of the early Church, and to recall the ministry of the apostles and martyrs who spread the Christian faith.

"The liturgical year provides a structure for the Church's collective memory, a way of consecrating our human experience of time in the celebration of God's work - in Christ and in human beings made holy through Christ.

"This act of Christian remembering has proved, over time, to have an extraordinary depth. Through the structuring of our Christian memory, the past is able to come into our present."

Common Worship: Times and Seasons

Seasons

The liturgical year is divided into the following seasons:



Advent (starts the 4th Sunday before Christmas – preparing for the coming of Jesus)



Christmas (25th December – 6th January – Jesus' Birth)

Epiphany season (6 season (6 season (6th January – 2nd February – starts with the visit of the Wise men, remembers Jesus' baptism & declaration by the Holy Spirit that he was the son of God and ends with the presentation in the temple)



The presentation of Jesus in the temple - Candlemas (6 weeks/40 days after Christmas day approx 2nd Feb)

Ordinary Time (following the Presentation of Christ in the Temple)



Lent (a time of fasting - 7 weeks before Easter, starting with Ash Wednesday, preceded by Shrove Tuesday (pancake day))

Easter (which includes the Easter Vigil and the Easter Liturgy)



Ascension Day – 40th day of Easter. Jesus' ascension into heaven.



Pentecost – 50th day after Easter. The Holy Spirit descended on the disciples who were able to speak in 'tongues'/many languages. They started preaching about Jesus.



Trinity Sunday – the first Sunday after Pentecost. Remembers the Trinitarian aspect of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Ordinary Time (following Pentecost)

More information about the liturgical seasons and what they mean

Advent

The season of Advent marks the start of the Christian year, and is a season of expectation and preparation as the Church looks forward to celebrating the birth of Christ.

Although it is a season of preparation, the characteristic note of Advent is expectation, rather than penitence. In this way it has a different mood from Lent. Commercial pressure has also made it harder to retain an appropriate sense of alert watchfulness in our anticipation of Christmas but, for many Christians, the Church's preparation for the coming of Christ is a powerful reminder of the real meaning of the season.

In the northern hemisphere, Advent falls at the darkest time of the year, and the natural symbols of darkness and light are powerfully at work throughout Advent and Christmas. The progressive lighting of candles on the Advent wreath, acts as a liturgical Advent calendar, and is a valuable way of involving children in the liturgy.

As Christmas draws nearer, the focus falls on John the Baptist and then, finally, on Mary, as she prepares to give birth to the Saviour.

Christmas

The celebration of Christ's coming among us at Christmas, the incarnation, is one of the two poles of the Christian year, along with the narrative of his death and resurrection.

Christmas is much more than simply the celebration of Jesus' birth: it reminds us of the central truth of 'the word becoming flesh and dwelling among us' (John 1.14), fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 7.14 that the virgin will conceive and bear a Son, who will be called Emmanuel, 'God is with us'.

One of the challenges for the Church is to continue to celebrate the season of Christmas after the secular world has turned its thoughts elsewhere. Historically Christmas would have extended at least until the Epiphany (the twelve days of Christmas) or as a more extended marking of the incarnation until 2 February, a celebration of forty days.

Epiphany

The Feast of the Epiphany on the 6th January marks the beginning of the season of Epiphany. Epiphany means manifestation and the traditional observation begins with the celebration of the visit of wise men from the East. It then explores other ways in which Christ reveals himself to be the Son of God: the celebration of the baptism of Christ by John, when the voice from heaven declared Jesus to be God's beloved Son; and Jesus's first miracle, when he turned water into wine at a wedding in Cana.

In this perspective, the season of Epiphany provides an opportunity for the Church to pray for the worldwide mission of the Church. The week of Prayer for Christian Unity falls appropriately in the Epiphany season.

The end of the season is marked the Feast of the Presentation on the 2nd February. Jesus is brought to the Temple by his parents, according to the Law of Israel. There he is recognized by Anna and Simeon, who declares him to be 'a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel.' The traditional service makes use of a procession of candles as part of the liturgy, and so the Feast is often known as Candlemas.

Ordinary Time

The Calendar includes two periods of Ordinary Time: an extended period after Pentecost, and a much shorter time between Candlemas and Ash Wednesday. Ordinary time allows for more uninterrupted reading of scripture in sequence, for the exploration of other themes such as creation and the environment, and for creative responses to the Saints' Days that occur at this time.

Lent

Ash Wednesday marks the start of observation of Lent the most solemn time of the Christian Year. Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence: from the Middle Ages it became the custom to begin Lent by marking Christians with the sign of the cross in ash on their foreheads. The season is traditionally marked by self-examination, fasting and preparation for Easter. It is a time when Christians reflect on the biblical account of Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13).

It also became a time when those who were to be baptized at Easter were instructed in the Christian faith. It became customary for the whole Christian community to join them in study and self-reflection, through a period of forty days, corresponding to the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan.

As Holy Week approaches, the atmosphere of the season darkens. Bible readings begin to anticipate the story of Christ's suffering and death. Holy Week begins with the re-enactment of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. This is the beginning of a journey of the imagination which takes us to the Upper Room for the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, through Jesus' betrayal, trial and crucifixion on Good Friday. Easter Eve, or Holy Saturday, is a day like no other, a day of desolation and despair. In the Easter Vigil, the Church gathers to call to mind the mighty works of God through reading of scripture, in preparation for the proclamation of the resurrection, which marks the beginning of the celebration of Easter.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is celebrated on Wednesday seven weeks before Easter or the day after Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day). This is a Christian observance which represents the first day of Lent and the starting of approximately 6 weeks of fasting and penance.

Celebration\Observance

Ash Wednesday represents the first day of Lent in which practicing Christians do approximately 6 weeks of fasting prior to Easter. In some areas church service is provided where priests place blessed ashes in the form of a cross on the forehead of the individuals. The ashes are meant to express grief and sorrow for sins and failure. Lent (about 6 weeks) provides the people a penance, sinners will undergo prior to being admitted to Holy Communion before Easter.

History

The tradition of Ash Wednesday originated around the 8th century and goes back to the time in Leviticus 16 where the Lord establishes an annual day of repentance for the Israelites by humbling oneself through fasting and prayer.

Easter

The Easter Liturgy has included baptism or the renewal of baptismal promises from the earliest times. Those who are baptised are united with Christ in his death and resurrection. Traditionally, new fire is kindled and from this the Easter candle is lit and held aloft with the proclamation: 'The light of Christ'. This Easter liturgy can provide a real experience of new life. This passing from darkness to light offers hope to all the faithful, as the Church celebrates the risen Christ.

The season of Easter is celebrated for fifty days culminating in the feast of Pentecost. Since the late fourth century, on the fortieth day there has been a kind of staging-post celebrating Christ's ascension to heaven. This marks the end of his earthly ministry and it is therefore closely connected with the theme of mission. Matthew's Gospel ends with Jesus's final words to his disciples, that they should go to all nations and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28.19-20). In John's Gospel, Jesus instructed his followers to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14.15-17). The feast of Pentecost celebrates the account of the Holy Spirit coming on the disciples empowering them for mission (Acts 2:1-47). Ascension and Pentecost are closely linked. The Church is now to be the new body of Christ, filled with his life through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Ascension Day

Ascension Day is observed in the United Kingdom on the 40th day of Easter. It commemorates Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven, according to the New Testament of the Bible.



Ascension Day marks Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven, according to Christian belief. Ascension Day marks Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven, according to Christian belief.

What do people do?

Some Christians in the United Kingdom attend church services on Ascension Day to celebrate this event. Prayers are made and people sing hymns at these services. Communion, also known as Eucharist, may also be offered to the congregation. Ascension Day marks the end of *Rogationtide*, which is a time when people pray for blessings to occur.

According to some sources, some schools used to have a day off on Ascension Day in the United Kingdom. However, students who attend Sunday school or take part in religious studies (such as classes) may participate in lessons or activities that explain the meaning of Ascension Day.

Public life

Ascension Day is neither a bank nor public holiday in the United Kingdom. Offices, retail stores, educational institutions and public transit systems stick with their usual schedules.

Background

Ascension Day is one of the earliest Christian festivals dating back to the year 68 CE. According to the New Testament in the Bible, Jesus Christ met several times with his disciples during the 40 days after his resurrection to instruct them on how to carry out his teachings. It is believed that on the 40th day he took them to the Mount of Olives, where they watched as he ascended to heaven.

Ascension Day marks the end of the Easter season and occurs ten days before Pentecost. Depending upon the phases of the moon in a particular year, Ascension Day is usually celebrated on a Thursday. However, some churches may choose to celebrate it on the following Sunday. Many Eastern Orthodox churches calculate the date of *Pascha* (Easter) according to the Julian calendar, rather than the Gregorian calendar used by many western churches, so their Ascension Day usually occurs after the western observance.

Pentecost

Pentecost is a Christian observance commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus Christ's disciples, according to the Christian Bible. Many Christians in the United Kingdom celebrate Pentecost, which is also known as Pentecost Sunday, Whitsunday, or Whit Sunday.



The dove is a popular symbol of the Holy Spirit.

What do people do?

Pentecost is a joyous period for many Christians in the United Kingdom. Many churches have special Pentecost services for people – both members and guests – to learn more about Pentecost, its history and the meaning of this occasion in modern times. Whit Sunday is called “Bread and Cheese Day” in Gloucestershire because of an old tradition that involves throwing bread and cheese.

Many church groups organise celebrations in venues such as parks or community halls. These celebrations often include speeches from special guests, music, food, activities for children, and opportunities for people to socialize. Pentecost is also a day allocated for baptisms in some churches. Many Christians recognize Pentecost as the birth of the Christian church.

The Pentecost Festival is a Christian festival in London during the Pentecost weekend. The festival features various events including music, sport, art, and cultural events. Many churches and Christian organizations participate in this festival. The Pentecost Festival was first held in 2008 and featured 150 events at more than 60 venues and outdoor spaces. More than 100 people were out on the streets around the events, talking to people and praying.

Public life

Whitsunday is not a bank holiday in the United Kingdom. Traffic and parking conditions may be busy in areas where large Pentecost events are held.

Background

According to the Christian Bible, it was on the 50th day after Easter when the apostles prayed together and the Holy Spirit descended on them. They received the “gift of tongues” – the ability to speak in other languages – and immediately began to preach about Jesus Christ to Jewish people from all over the world who flocked to Jerusalem for the Feast of Shavuot.

Christian Pentecost not only commemorated the Holy Spirit's visit but also marked the birth of the Christian Church. Although it is not certain when Christians started observing Pentecost, it may have

been early as the first century CE. Whitsuntide, also referred to as Whitsun in modern times, is the period beginning with the Saturday before Whitsunday and ending the following Saturday.

According to church tradition, Pentecost is about seven weeks after Easter Sunday, or 50 days after Easter, including Easter Day. In some Orthodox churches, Whitsunday is observed after the date set by the western churches. This is because some Orthodox churches still observe holidays according to the Julian calendar, which preceded the Gregorian calendar adopted by many western churches. The Easter date depends on the ecclesiastical approximation of the March equinox.

Symbols

The symbols of Pentecost are those of the Holy Spirit and include flames, fire, wind, and a dove.

Appendix 2:



Prayer

We teach the children the Lord's Prayer (traditional version) and our School Prayer. We also encourage children and staff to write their own for a variety of purposes e.g. to thank God; to ask for help; to say sorry. Lighting a candle can be effective way to 'still' the children before starting to pray.

Here is some advice on prayer from the Church of England:

- You don't have to know any prayers if you want to pray - in fact, words can often get in the way. Picture Jesus, and then say what is in your heart, what you feel.
- **Remember!**
God hears every prayer - but not all prayers are answered in the way we might expect or desire: we don't always pray for his will to be done!
- **'Arrow' Prayers**
can be offered to God anywhere, at any time.

But thankfully we don't live all our lives in moments of extreme crisis. What about day-to-day praying? We need to come closer to God, to experience His love for us and to try to make sense of where we are in the world. Prayer is the way we do this.



How to start?

Use your **hand**.

Your fingers can be used to bring to mind different things to pray for.

thumb

this is the strongest digit on your hand. Give thanks for all the strong things in your life, like home and family, relationships that support and sustain you.

index finger

this is the pointing finger. Pray for all those people and things in your life who guide and help you. Friends, teachers, doctors, nurses, emergency services and so on.

middle finger

this is the tallest finger. Pray for all the important people who have power in the world, like world

leaders and their governments, members of parliament and local councillors, the Royal Family, other world leaders and their governments.

ring finger

this is the weakest finger on your hand. It cannot do much by itself. Remember the poor, the weak, the helpless, the hungry, the sick, the ill and the bereaved.

little finger

this is the smallest and the last finger on your hand. Pray for yourself.

When should I pray?

Traditionally, prayer times have been morning and evening, but you can choose a time which is best for you. It helps to be somewhere quiet, where you can have some time for yourself.

Do I have to kneel?

Kneeling is the traditional posture for penitence and standing for praise, but you can pray anywhere - walking, standing, sitting, whatever feels comfortable.

What else do I need to know?

Be creative - use music, a stone, a feather, a flower, or a candle to help you focus - if you are very young or elderly, be careful with candles!

Prayer activity is a discipline - it can be difficult at times, just like keeping fit, being on a diet, or keeping weeds down in the garden! Little and often is best, but don't give up! No prayer, however inadequate you may feel it to be, is ever wasted or of no value.

What next?

Build up a collection of favourite prayers and sayings -anything that speaks to you. You can find them in greeting cards, cuttings in the press or bookmarks and prayer cards. You could make a scrapbook for them.

Useful books

Here are some books you might find helpful.

The Pocket Prayers series -especially Pocket Prayers for Children (also useful for adults first learning to pray) and Pocket Prayers (The Classic Collection) - both by Christopher Herbert and available from Church House Publishing.

How to Pray: Alone, with others, at any time, in any place - Stephen Cottrell, Church House Publishing (2010)

Confirmation Prayer Book - Stephen Lake, SPCK (2002)

How to Pray: A User's Guide - John Pritchard, SPCK (2011)

There are many, many more designed to help people like you. Prayer is life-enhancing. Try it!

If you are stuck for a prayer at lunchtime or the end of the day, you might like to try these:

Lunchtime

*Thank-you for the world so sweet, Thank-you for food we eat, Thank-you for the birds that sing,
Thank-you God for everything. Amen.*

End of the day

At the end of the day, we'd just like to say, thank-you God for our work and play; we've tried to be good, for we know that we should, that's our prayer at the end of the day. Amen.

There are several prayer books available to loan from the Headteacher's office too!

Appendix 3

Liturgical Colours

Many of our children do not attend church and do not get the opportunity to see how the vestments change as the Liturgical seasons change. We have a toy vicar who we place on our worship table in the hall and change his vestments to match the season.

We also have display boards in the hall which we use to help the children understand the liturgical seasons, the school's values and the theme of the half-term's worship. **These displays are greatly enhanced by the pupils' work and we encourage staff to get creative!**



White: is the colour for the festal periods from Christmas Day to the Presentation and from Easter Day to the Eve of Pentecost, for Trinity Sunday, for Festivals of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary, for All Saints' Day, and for the Festivals of those saints not venerated as martyrs, for the Feast of Dedication of a church, at Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday and in thanksgiving for Holy Communion and Holy Baptism. It is used for Marriages, and is suitable for Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination, though red may be preferred. It may be used in preference to purple or black for Funerals, and should be used at the Funeral of a child. Where a church has two sets of white, one may be kept for great Festivals indicated as 'gold or white'.



Red: is used during Holy Week (except at Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday), on the Feast of Pentecost, may be used between All Saints' Day and the First Sunday of Advent (except where other provision is made) and is used for the Feasts of those saints venerated as martyrs. It is appropriate for any services which focus on the gift of the Holy Spirit, and is therefore suitable for Baptism, Confirmation and Ordination. Coloured hangings are traditionally removed for Good Friday and Easter Eve, but red is the colour for the liturgy on Good Friday.



Purple: (which may vary from 'Roman purple' to violet, with blue as an alternative) is the colour for Advent and from Ash Wednesday until the day before Palm Sunday. It is recommended for Funerals and for the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, although either black or white may be preferred. A Lent array of unbleached linen is sometimes used as an alternative to purple, but only from Ash Wednesday until the day before Palm Sunday. Rose-colour is sometimes used as an alternative on the Third Sunday of Advent and the Fourth Sunday of Lent.



Green: is used from the day after the Presentation until Shrove Tuesday, and from the day after Pentecost until the eve of All Saints' Day, except when other provision is made. It may also be used, rather than red, between All Saints' Day and the First Sunday of Advent.

