

Collective Worship and Assemblies

Delivering an assembly or leading a collective worship is a fantastic way to partner with your local school.

The starting point should be an open conversation with the school to find out what they are wanting to gain from the assembly/collective worship. Often a school will want you to talk about your own beliefs and how they influence your life. This is not an opportunity to evangelise but to share your personal experience of faith.

Church festivals and seasons are a good starting point for assembly topics - Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost.

Delivering a collective worship or assembly is valuable in its own right but also provides the opportunity to develop an ongoing relationship between the church and school.

Important bits to bear in mind:

- Find out what guidance and policies the school have to be clear about what they expect from a visitor.
- Be on time and do not run over! Ask the school about timings and the usual length of the assembly.
- Ask about any additional needs to be aware of.
- Ask about the technology available and aim to email any slides, videos or songs to the school ahead of your assembly.

“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 ... and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes.”

Religious Education and Collective Worship, 1994

Please bear in mind:

Collective worship or assemblies can vary in style and logistics depending on the school. There are differences between assemblies and collective worship. An assembly is a gathering of the school community to convey a message whereas collective worship is a gathering that provides the opportunity for worship and reflection. However, some schools exclusively use the language of assemblies even when it contains an act of collective worship.

Collective worship and assemblies may look very different depending on the make up of the school community. This is why it is crucial to have an open dialogue with the school to ensure you are aware of their expectations.

It is important that you are aware of the culture and context of your local school when offering to support collective worship or deliver assemblies.



Collective Worship and Assemblies

in non-church/community schools

School Values

Most schools will have their own set of school values. Link your assembly to these values. It could be getting the children to think how the character in the bible story showed resilience or why as a Christian you are inspired to be caring.

Can I pray?

Yes, but it is worth discussing with the school beforehand. If you are praying at the end of your assembly, communicate it clearly that it is invitational.

A simple way to ensure it is an invitation would be to say, "I am going to say a Christian prayer to finish our assembly. If you would like to join in with my prayer, you can say "amen" at the end, which means "I agree"."

You can also offer the opportunity to just listen or reflect instead.

Provide space for children to reflect and think

It is important that children have space to reflect, think or wonder about something during the assembly - not just to come and be spoken at. It is not a lesson but an opportunity for spiritual development.

Sharing faith appropriately

Your role is to share your faith, including the Gospel and the impact that this has on your day to day life. It is not to suggest that pupils or staff should become Christians. It is, however, OK to encourage pupils to reflect on what Christians believe and how it makes them live, thinking about how this might challenge their own beliefs and ways of living.

Further Resources

[Scripture Union Assemblies](#)

[SPCK Assemblies](#)

[Faith in Kids School Resources](#)



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Leeds

Collective Worship and Assemblies

in Church of England Schools

Starting points

Even in a Church of England school it is crucial not to assume everyone shares similar beliefs. Collective worship is for everyone in the whole school community (including adults), whatever their starting points or world views. The school will likely have a Collective Worship Policy and often a long-term plan that will can be used to guide your theme and structure.

Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring

Pupils and staff will come from different faith backgrounds and be at different stages of their spiritual journeys. Children should be invited to participate but it is OK if they don't want to join in with elements of the worship, such as prayers or answering questions.

Inclusive worship should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about life, regardless of their belief. The Christian beliefs shared should challenge everyone to think about their own lives and beliefs, inspiring them to want to make a change in the world.

The 2023
SIAMS
Framework asks
the question:
"How is
collective worship
enabling pupils
and adults to
flourish
spiritually?"

Involving pupils

The Church of England guidance says that pupils should be involved in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship.

Church representatives can play an important role in helping groups of children to shape Collective Worship to suit their needs, experience and context. Be willing to support and enable the children to take ownership of their worship experience.

Links to further guidance and reading:
[Diocese of Leeds Education Collective Worship Page](#)
[Church of England Collective Worship Page](#)