

Worship Works... with the right atmosphere

Creating the right atmosphere for worship is essential to ensure that pupils respond in a positive way. Take a look at the way available space is used, its acoustics and sight-lines, the arrangement of the pupils and the way in which they assemble...

The quality of sound is affected by... whether there is an adjacent kitchen!

The school council indicated that the hall was the worst place for learning as the floor is very hard. We now use older PE mats to cover the whole floor for the pupils' comfort

Worship works... when asked, all children had a positive attitude to all forms of worship and were able to justify which day was their favourite worship day

- which environments are available - hall, gym, communal areas, classrooms? Could these areas be enhanced - even temporarily or occasionally - for Collective Worship? A large space may be made more welcoming and inviting. A multi-functional room or hall may be made more 'special' for worship by rearranging chairs, clearing clutter and cleaning the board
- can pupils hear clearly? The quality of sound is affected by the size of the room, the furnishings - and whether there is an adjacent kitchen!
- to see what is going on at the front, are pupils better standing, sitting on chairs, or sitting on the floor? Standing may make the pupils more restless. Sitting on the floor can be undignified as pupils get older. Those at the back of a long hall may feel excluded because they cannot see or hear clearly
- can you provide a focus for the daily or weekly worship theme? Worship may be conducted in front of a permanent display board for prayers, prose, photos, quotations and reflective artwork, all of which could be contributed by pupils. Alternatively, a visual focus may be provided by a small draped table with artefacts, pictures, religious symbols or a candle
- can the thought or theme of the worship for that week be displayed prominently? For example, the hall, the gym, each classroom, wherever children gather
- do pupils come together so that they are not kept waiting unnecessarily long for other classes? Stagger the time pupils leave their classrooms, or use different entry points into the hall. As far as possible, teachers should ensure classes are released on time.

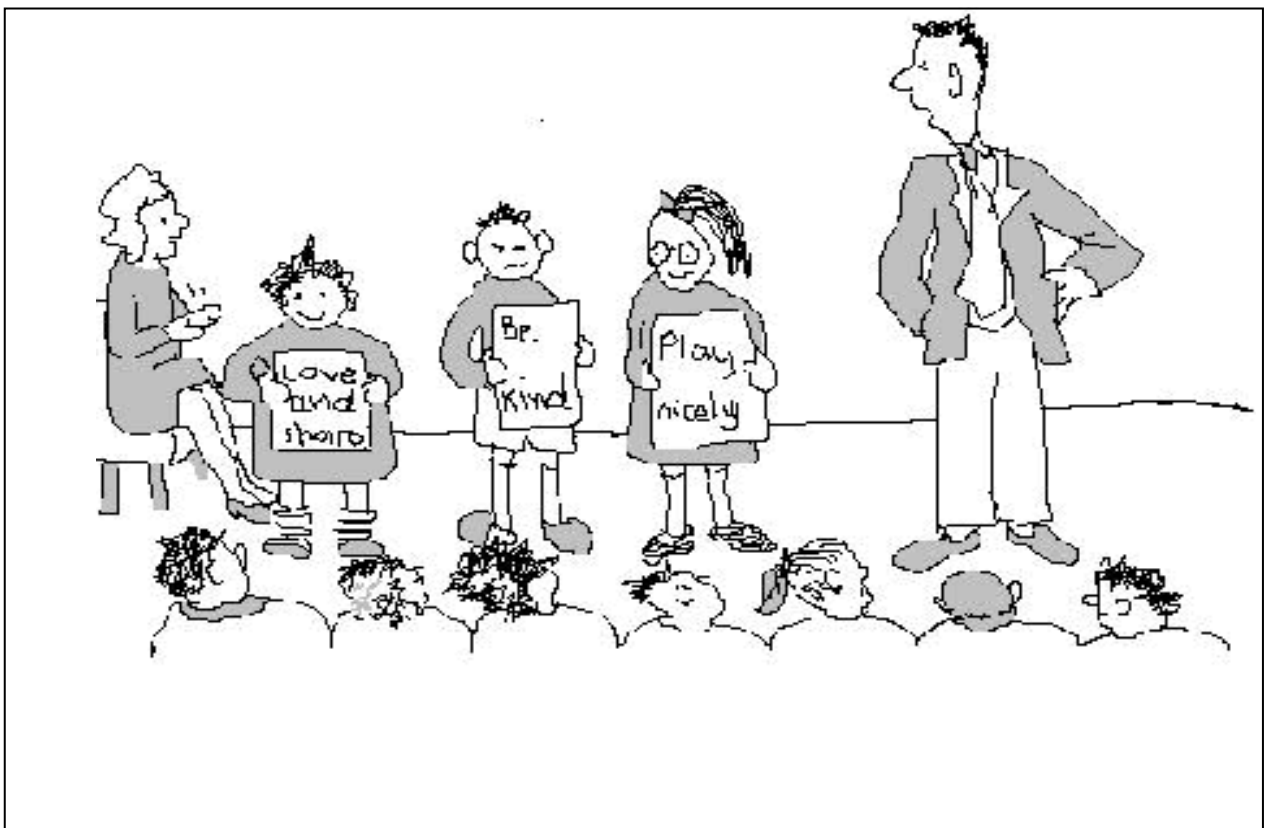


Worship Works... with a positive attitude

When is it Assembly and not Collective Worship?

A school may **assemble** to share notices or sporting successes, but reflecting upon these achievements to explore human qualities such as teamwork, determination, loyalty and courage could constitute **worship** if explored through a religious or spiritual context.

It is better to read school notices at the beginning rather than the end as it is essential that pupils be offered positive experiences by not mixing worship with, for example, matters of discipline that give a negative message. The themes chosen for worship should be meaningful and relevant to pupils, then they will be more likely to feel that the experience is worthwhile. Ensure that pupils are left with a positive message on which to continue the reflection of the theme.



Worship Works... in the classroom

Whole school worship may not always be feasible with large numbers of pupils. Schools are at liberty to organise their weekly programme of worship to suit their circumstances. Consideration should be given to planning a variety of regular acts of worship to include those specifically for:

Classroom acts of worship are uniquely valuable

- a year group
- a key stage
- a class
- a tutor group.

Within these smaller pupil gatherings, themes can be tailored more closely to match to the interests of the particular age group. Consideration should be given to rearranging the way pupils are seated, so that the intimacy of the classroom environment is maximised. The timing of the classroom worship within the day can very often be flexible.

It is possible to make worship very special in the classroom. But as it takes place in such familiar surroundings, it must be quite distinct from the rest of the classroom activities. The preparation for worship 'routine' might include choosing music, lighting a candle or carrying out a stilling exercise. Within the room there could be a regular display or a focal point for worship with symbols, pictures and artefacts.



Classroom acts of worship are uniquely valuable. If they are carefully planned for, they can provide opportunities for pupils to respond more creatively, by discussing and sharing opinions, playing music, creating artwork, dancing and moving, and writing prose and poetry. Circle Time technique is an excellent tool for smaller worship groups. Pupils may have the opportunity to share their views whilst learning to listen to and respect the views of others.

Class teachers are most easily able to plan classroom worship for their own classes,

Worship works... when we hear stories that we haven't heard before

because they are the ones who know their own pupils best. They can therefore 'personalise' the theme, whilst working within the whole school worship plan for the week.

Worship Works... when it is inclusive

The basic requirement for Collective Worship is that "...all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of Collective Worship". In Special Schools Collective Worship should occur on a daily basis "...so far as is practicable" (DfE Circular 1/94).

As with all acts of Collective Worship, the success of the activity depends on the quality of the planning. Where Collective Worship is most meaningful and contributes effectively to the development of school ethos and shared values, it has clear aims and objectives and is seen as a regular and important part of the life and celebrations of the school community. It is thematically planned in advance across the school year, taking account of the school cycle of events and the Christian calendar.

Best practice for Collective Worship in Special Schools would also be seen as best practice in community schools and ideally involves a multi-sensory approach. This may include (over a period of time):

Music - selected to evoke a particular mood or with a strong beat or rhythm to elicit a response from as many pupils as possible. Pupils and teachers may contribute, playing instruments such as maracas, chime bars, tambourines, shakers, drums and khartals.

Light - coloured or moving light provides a focus and attracts attention. This may be achieved through the use of lamps, candles (with appropriate caution), transparencies on an overhead projector, or disco-style lights.

Aromas - from the burning of perfumed oils, candles and incense sticks, to evoke an atmosphere.

Singing - involving pupils in singing helps generate a feeling of community. A school song and familiar hymns and tunes enable pupils to recognise and participate in the activity of Collective Worship.

Actions - such as clapping and beating out a rhythm or other repetitive actions help to encourage participation.

Drama and role-play - most pupils enjoy dressing up and can help recreate a story or event using appropriate props. This is an effective way of helping them to be actively involved in the act of Collective Worship.

Visitors - local clergy, other leaders and faith members are usually very willing to contribute to Collective Worship. They will appreciate clear guidance about what the school expects from their contribution. (See *Guidelines for visitors* in the Appendices)



Worship Works... with elements drawn from a number of different faiths

Worship works...

the children liked visitor 'workshops' because they learned something new

Worship works...

when we have visitors

Worship works...

we like to go to the church

Britain is a country in which people of many faiths live side by side. Many people living in the areas surrounding the Humber may not encounter the diverse faiths and cultures more often found within the larger cities. It is appropriate therefore to consider the shared values of faiths such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism as part of Collective Worship. These six form the contexts for the locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. There may be pupils and staff within the school who are members of faith traditions, including lesser-known faith traditions such as Baha'i, and it is appropriate to draw on their knowledge and practice.



Schools may choose to use elements from different faith traditions as part of worship, whilst remembering that "in the main, the overall provision of Collective Worship should be broadly Christian" and also being careful to respect the integrity of each tradition.

Approaches to using elements of different faiths may be 'multi-faith' or 'inter-faith'. Multi-faith is an expression normally indicating that many faiths are involved. Inter-faith points to interaction between the separate traditions. Schools may choose to use either or both approaches as part of the programme for Collective Worship.

There can be great value in using material and teachings from different faiths. Many acts of Collective Worship are based on a theme and material from different faiths can be used to make a contribution. In this way, the shared values of different faiths may be explored and differences respected. Members of different faith traditions could be invited to share their response to an ultimate question or to explain what a particular prayer or writing from scripture means to them. Before inviting members of faith traditions to Collective Worship please refer to *Guidelines for visitors* in the Appendices.

Guidance and information about the six faiths mentioned above may be found in the locally Agreed Syllabus.

Care must be taken when using a multi-faith approach to Collective Worship. To avoid confusion, it is important to identify for the pupils, which faith tradition the elements of worship have been drawn from, and to maintain the distinctiveness of that faith. There should be a clear focus to the worship. Where faiths take a different standpoint on an issue it is important to recognise this and to promote understanding and respect for different views points.

A multi-faith or inter-faith act of Collective Worship is of value when it provides for, or supports, the following:

- Helping pupils to develop understanding and respect for the beliefs and practices of faith traditions
- Incorporating themes, such as care for the environment and sanctity of life, which are concerns common to all faiths
- Involving members of different faith groups so pupils are enabled to see that the rich variety of faiths can come together in worship
- Inviting speakers from local faith groups to raise awareness of the diversity and range of faith traditions and groups
- Encouraging dialogue between different faith groups which contributes to the development of personal beliefs and values
- Allowing pupils to make a contribution so they learn from each other.

Pupils like the chance to listen to and respond to different viewpoints and perspectives



Worship Works... when it's broad and balanced

Worship works...

the candle helps us when we pray

Worship works...

one child said when the candle was blown out, it made him think about Jesus going to heaven

Worship works...

we like it when the stories are to do with what's happening

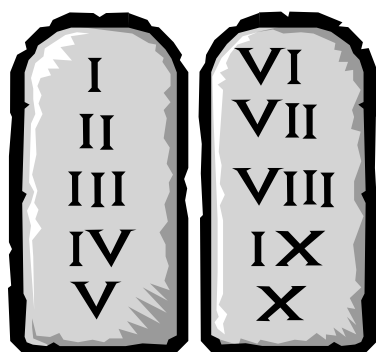
In developing a broad and balanced approach to Collective Worship, consider such concepts to provide useful starting points:

Commitment - is the individual and collective response to an ideal, a person or a group, which makes people become members of different groups, affecting the way they live and believe. It refers to the reasons for devotion, loyalty, doubts and certainties about aspects of traditions and ideas about responsibility.

Community - involves belonging to a group with shared values and beliefs. It can be expressed through the gathering together of many believers for worship and other events.

Faith - is a central concept of trust and confidence found in many traditions and as such an understanding of it should be developed through the exploration of various beliefs including those of the young people.

Fundamentalism - relates to the roots of a belief and is not a description of a religious stance. People of all religions and none may hold fundamental beliefs.



Morality - refers to the ways in which people live their lives according to rules, laws and traditions, which may be personally or socially defined. It is a central feature of secular and religious communities and traditions. It affects the ways in which people interact with other people and their environment.

Mystery - refers to otherness, unanswered questions and that which is beyond human understanding. Faith requires a certain acceptance of mystery. Mystery is closely linked to spirituality.

Responsibility - for self, others and the environment is a central concept in all faiths and life stances.

Revelation - has a central place in the development of many beliefs. It refers in the main to beliefs about how deity manifests itself and the numerous forms of response to such manifestations, beliefs

Worship works...

most children like the music...

it is calming and relaxing

Worship works...

use of music, lights, candles, incense, props and artifacts for a range of cultures, traditions and religion

about the imperative nature of revelation as demonstrated by codes of conduct, beliefs about how 'ultimate questions' have been responded to.

Sacredness - provides a key to understanding why certain people, places, times and artifacts are treated in special ways. It involves ideas initially about why such things are special and goes on to involve the meanings associated with those things and the reasons why they are treated in special ways.

Spirituality - refers to the inner feelings and beliefs that people may have; the idea that there is more to a person than the 'body', the inner and outer responses of believers to aspects of their tradition.

Tradition - refers to the communication of ideas and beliefs from one person to another and from one generation to the next, to the origins of beliefs to the many forms of expression within religions and how such forms are used to communicate ideas. It may, in addition, refer to the balance between static and dynamic aspects of faith.

Transcendence - refers to that which may be beyond the physical, to ideas about deity; to intuitive as well as empirical knowledge, to beliefs about the possibility and nature of existence beyond the physical and beyond death.

Worship - is devotion to that which is held to be of supreme worth. It may be an activity showing reverence, adoration or service, which is an important part of the lives of many people. It refers both to the observable features of worship and deeper meanings, to ideas about celebrations, rituals and ceremonies, to the different forms of worship and notions about 'worth' of things.



The following checklists may help teachers to consider the way concepts could be addressed in a programme of themes for acts of Collective

QCA GUIDANCE - The Self

We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development. On the basis of these values, we should:

- Develop an understanding of our own characters, strengths and weaknesses
- Develop self-respect and self-discipline;
- Clarify the meaning and purpose in our lives and decide, on the basis of this, how we believe that our lives should be lived;
- Make responsible use of our talents, rights and opportunities;
- Strive, throughout life, for knowledge, wisdom and understanding;
- Take responsibility, within our capabilities, for our own lives.

QCA, Guidance for Schools - Statement of Values, 1997

Checklist - Ourselves and Others

Understanding and valuing ourselves means:

- Valuing the uniqueness of each individual;
- Developing a sense of their own identity;
- Recognising our own inner life (including our thoughts);
- Reflecting on values, emotions, and feelings;
- Becoming aware of personal strengths and weaknesses;
- Developing self respect;
- Exploring and reflecting upon attitudes;
- Understanding the difference between right and wrong;
- Living with integrity;
- Balancing rights and responsibilities when making decisions about how to act;
- Exploring questions about the meaning of life;
- Developing a purpose in life;
- Exploring questions about ultimate reality, including questions about the existence and nature of God;
- Reflecting on personal beliefs;
- Understanding responses to fundamental questions such as those to do with suffering, death and life after death.

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Worship Works... best where there is a policy for Collective

Worship

To ensure proper ownership of the policy, it needs to involve staff, parents, pupils and governors.

It might include the following:

A Rationale

- A statement concerning the status of the school, including acknowledgement of legal requirements, trust deeds and guidance documents from the LA and Diocese.

The Aims

- A definition or description of Collective Worship
- The contribution of Collective Worship to other aspects of the curriculum (including cross-curricular dimensions and themes and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The contribution of other areas of the curriculum to Collective Worship.

The Organisation

- A coordinator who is responsible for the management of worship and the extent of their responsibility
- Venues, timings, frequency and details of pupil grouping
- Use of visitors and governors
- Involvement of parents.

The Content

- The planning of Collective Worship, including the cycle of themes
- Range of strategies used in the delivery of Collective Worship.

*I don't like just
one person
speaking*

*Cultural dancing
please!*



The children should have time to think of their own prayers instead of the school one



Resources

- Budget for Collective Worship and provision for CPD
- How the school's resources are made available to those leading worship.

Evaluation and Review

- The recording, monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship
- Review of the policy.

Rights of withdrawal

- A statement making clear the right of parents to withdraw their children and details of the provision made for any who are withdrawn.

Worship Works... best when there is a Collective Worship coordinator

The role of the Collective Worship coordinator may be defined in the school's Collective Worship policy document. There is sometimes a worship 'team' involving other members of staff, pupils, school governors, professionals and members of the local churches.

The Collective Worship Co-ordinator's role is to:

- assist governors and headteacher in fulfilling their legal responsibilities with respect to Collective Worship.
Do you send invitations to your governors at various times throughout the year?
- work with staff to support the planning and delivery of worship.
Prepare a planning sheet (See Appendices)
- develop documentation for planning, monitoring, evaluating and recording acts or worship
- review provision for Collective Worship with the worship team. *See next section: "Making Worship Work - Recording and Evaluating" and "Reviewing"*
- plan for the development of Collective Worship
An annual report is useful; your SACRE would be interested to read this!
- review and update the Collective Worship policy every two to three years
(See Appendices)
- develop an adequate range of resources for worship
See "Suggested resources" (Appendices)
- attend relevant CPD & disseminate information to staff
Lead a discussion on worship in a staff meeting



Worship Works...when it is planned

The logistics of whole school assemblies in a large Junior School have led to the use of networked Podcast assemblies (radio assemblies):

Podcasts last 5-8 minutes played using the IWB and an appropriate visual image/moving pattern.

They end by inviting pupils to find out more about the stimulus and make a personal response

Who is responsible for Collective Worship?

The headteacher is ultimately responsible for Collective Worship in school.

Who will do the planning?

In schools where Collective Worship is seen to be most effective, an individual has been appointed to co-ordinate the planning, organisation and delivery of Collective Worship.

In addition, a planning group (which may include the headteacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors, LA and Diocesan Advisory Service, local clergy and local faith groups) has been formed to support the coordinator and to contribute to the formulation of the school policy for Collective Worship. This group is likely to meet annually to consider and evaluate the effectiveness of the worship provision and plan the subsequent year in outline. Further meetings could take place to detail the termly provision.

Consideration is also given to who might lead Collective Worship. A group or an individual may lead it. Often schools plan a weekly pattern of delivery when Collective Worship may be led by:

- the headteacher
- a deputy headteacher or member of staff
- regular visitors (e.g. local clergy, faith leaders)
- a small group (e.g. class, year, house).

In those schools where it is not possible to bring the whole community together, planning for Collective Worship needs to be given very careful thought in order to provide a coherent programme that may be delivered to different groups and different age-ranges.

In schools with limited space, different groupings may be appropriate. For example, one secondary school, which can only accommodate the number of pupils found in one year-group in its hall, holds 'vertical' assemblies each half term. This means that a quarter of the pupils from each year group come together for

Collective Worship whilst the rest of the school is having class assemblies. This strategy allows pupils to know what it is like to belong to a mixed-age community and to consider whole-school issues.

How much time should be allocated?

One way in which value can be attached to the daily act of Collective Worship is to ensure that it is a regular part of the school day, no matter how or when it is to take place. Providing an identifiable slot of time, which is entirely separate from time allocated for administration or timetabled lessons, ensures that staff and pupils are able to focus on the act of Collective Worship without undue distraction. Ten to fifteen minutes is an appropriate length of time.

What should be in the programme?

The programme should include themes, activities and celebrations which are relevant to, and which have value for, the individual school and the aptitudes of its pupils. Therefore no single programme can be offered here. However, the following suggestions may be helpful.

Start with a blank calendar and add:

- term dates and mid-term holidays
- special days in the life of the school (plus the LA or Diocese)
- religious events and festivals from Christianity and other faiths
- local secular events and 'happenings' including, for example, an annual charity day
- national events, for example, Holocaust Memorial Day (27th January), Remembrance Day
- international events, for example, the Olympics, World Aids Day (3rd December)

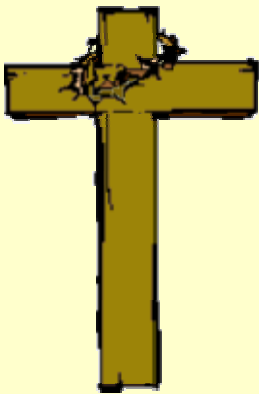
Consider relevant themes for each term / half-term / week, perhaps relating them to previously identified events.

An example of the way in which a theme may be developed is suggested on the following page.

Worship fits in with a theme for a term – children are aware of the theme and can relate their class worship to whole school worship

Personal reflection is provided through listening to music, prayer and time to think about the story

We look at Jesus' cross... it helps us to think of Jesus



Daily

Each daily act of worship, which may be individual or part of a developing weekly theme, must take into account the aptitudes of the pupils, and elements of development and progression across the year groups.

Content of daily worship:

This should reflect

- the school calendar
- local, national and international events
- the balance required by the law
- suitability for the key stages and the number of pupils.

One theme can work in a variety of ways in worship. The easiest way to break down a theme is to brainstorm it with colleagues, selecting those aspects most suitable for promoting school issues and concerns, whilst taking account of the ages, aptitudes and interests of the pupils.

For example, the theme of 'love' might include:

- love of families, friends and neighbours
- sacrificial love
- love of God
- love of possessions
- agape
- unconditional love
- love of self
- idolatry

These may form the basis of worship over a week or two, linked to Christmas ("God so loved the world...") or to Remembrance Day (sacrificial love) or as a stand-alone theme. Future planning may revisit the same theme but explore a different aspect. Material from religious and non-religious sources may be used to support the theme.

(For suggested themes for Collective Worship, see Appendices.)

Worship Works... Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

Schools should regularly be asking questions and reviewing their provision for Collective Worship:

- how is Collective Worship monitored and how often?
- who should do the monitoring?
- how are the pupils involved?
- should it appear in the school development plan?
- is there a cycle for observation?
- is it reported to governors and discussed at their meetings?
- how will this process be used to review and further develop Collective Worship in future?
- when may your report be sent to SACRE?

The headteacher, in consultation with the governors, has overall responsibility to ensure that legal requirements are being met in a maintained school and that quality Collective Worship is taking place.

Similarly, in Voluntary Aided and Controlled Schools, it is the overall responsibility of the governors, in consultation with the headteacher, to ensure that legal requirements are met and that quality Collective Worship is taking place. This may be delegated to the headteacher, Collective Worship coordinator or worship team. Those responsible must ensure that acts of worship are in accordance with the school's Instrument of Government and in the case of church schools, that they are consistent with the faith and practice of the relevant church foundation and the local church community.

Children do intensive art as a form of worship – write a title on the board and children stretch their own vision e.g. heaven in picture form, whilst music is playing

The majority really enjoy singing – they just love to sing

In class, we turn out the lights and light the candle

Questions to ask:

- is there:
 - an effective Collective Worship policy?
 - evidence of planning and recording?
 - evidence that the quality of worship is evaluated?

- how much time is set aside for monitoring:
 - observations of acts of Collective Worship?
 - scrutiny of records of worship?
 - discussions with those who lead worship?
 - discussions with those who experience worship?

- is documentation consistent with observed practice?
- is Collective Worship well resourced?
- is there opportunity provided for CPD?
- are the various groupings and environments for Collective Worship maximizing opportunities?
- is equal provision made for all pupils?

Recording and Evaluating

Consider:

- manageable ways of recording what went well
- using feedback to inform future planning of worship.

Week by week there should be enough information recorded on the outcomes of daily acts of worship to inform an evaluation of the whole term's Collective Worship.

For instance, a school may decide to focus on spirituality within worship. Daily evaluations might include:

- pupils listened attentively

- lots of personal reflection
- silence at the end of the story
- in-depth questions asked by pupils.

*Too long,
some felt*

Evaluation also gives the opportunity to record brief notes on what actually happened:

- according to plan
- story too complex
- children responded well
- opportunity to address citizenship arose.

The easiest and most effective way of recording is to incorporate an 'Evaluation' column into the planning sheet.

This means that although each evaluation is very short, the information accumulated over time is invaluable for evaluating the effectiveness of a whole term's worship. These records could be used as the starting point for a staff discussion, perhaps as part of whole school Inset.

*Have more
visitors*

See Appendices.

Reviewing

Issues explored in staff groups might include:

- the balance of content (e.g. Christianity, world faiths, opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, reflection and response)
- methods currently in use and how other 'ingredients' might be added
- the resources required and how to build them up
- drawing up a bid for funding from central capitation

More acting

Other groups could discuss more substantive questions:

- whether silence or hymn practice counts as worship
- whether a teacher has to believe in what he or she is saying and doing when leading Collective Worship.

See School self-evaluation in Appendices.