



# PORTSMOUTH and WINCHESTER DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION



## Collective Worship 13 Advent 3

All the Collective Worship emails so far can be found on our website  
[http://portsmouth.anglican.org/what\\_we\\_do/education/school\\_staff/teachers/collective\\_worship/](http://portsmouth.anglican.org/what_we_do/education/school_staff/teachers/collective_worship/)

### The Worship – Major themes ‘UP’

#### Preparation

This is a story I first heard as a child. Told by a Vicar at one of the services at Christmas.

You may have a similar story which is suitable for an all age worship.

You can modify the ‘facts’ of this story to suit your circumstances, experiences and the age of the audience.

Don't let on that it's about a green wheelbarrow – that's part of the surprise.

#### Music on Entry

Your favourite Christmas Carol

#### Start the worship with a Christian Greeting

e.g. Lighting a Candle and saying “The Lord be with you.” “*And also with you.*”

#### There may be singing

A favourite Christmas Carol of the school.

#### The Story

One cold Christmas morning –

Who do you think was awake first in the village?

Take answers.

Well actually, and quite to everyone's surprise, it was not the children, or the milkman, or the policeman or the .....

It was the Vicar!

Yes – strange as it might seem the Vicar had not slept well. He had been out the night before, Christmas Eve, at the church taking the midnight service to welcome in Christmas Day and the birth of .....

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And the work did not stop there, because the vicar would be in church again at 9:00 am for the wonderful Christmas Day service.

But ..... you know the boiler (central heating in the church) was playing up and it would not start by itself – it needed a person to hold the button in for 15 seconds and then it would light and the church would get warm and everybody would be happy and guess who needed to be there to press and hold the button. Yes you guessed it – the Vicar.

So it was the Vicar who was first up on Christmas morning five am he got up and walked the short distance to the church. He had pressed the button and all was well, the boiler had fired up and the radiators in the church were already beginning to creek and gurgle as the hot water flowed through them.

Well can you imagine what else the Vicar had to do that day to get ready for the Christmas Day service?

Answers .....

Well done .....

He did have to put everything out and make sure the church was ready for all the people who would come out to celebrate the birth of God's own Son, Jesus, on Christmas Day.

And while he was getting out the cup and plate (chalice and paten) for Holy Communion his ears pricked up.

He heard the familiar sound of the main door latch rising in the lock.

What was that, someone here in the church this early?

Then he heard the creak of the hinge, must get some oil on that door he thought.

Yes there was someone coming into the church. But why so early – there's over an hour before people usually arrive – and very few people get to church early on Christmas Day – after all they have been up late ..... but that's another story.

The Vicar was curious – he wanted to see who was there but he didn't want whoever it was to see him.

In fact the Vicar was a little suspicious as to who would be out this early and he / she wondered what the person might be up to.

So crouching down he / she left the vestry and crept silently out and hid behind one of the choir stalls.

There – he could see the whole of the back of the church from here and not be seen.

The door closed, very quietly, and the latch fell back into place with the familiar click.

Hello, said the Vicar to himself, there is something strange going on – as he watched the top of a bobble hat move slowly along just behind the back row of chairs.

Someone is on their hands and knees, crawling along the back of my church, they clearly don't want to be seen. They must be up to no good!

The Vicar watched – the bobble hat moved up and down behind the back row of chairs towards the crib.

The wonderful crib, where only last night they had placed the very precious figure of the baby Jesus during the midnight service.

But what was that noise?

The Vicar did not recognise the noise at all. It wasn't the radiators gurgling, or the door hinges creaking or the door latch clicking.

No this was an unusual noise he had not heard before.

Squeak, squeak, squeak, squeak, it went, a regular squeak that you might get from a rusty wheel on a bicycle.

Why would someone come into church on Christmas Day, crouching on all fours, pushing a bicycle – they must be after a quick getaway or something.

The Vicar watched.

The bobble hat had stopped moving – it was by the crib. Then it was off again, now the person (whoever it was) was heading towards the front of the church. They would see the Vicar as soon as they turned the corner – so the Vicar quickly and silently moved out and headed for the main door of the church.

He / she was going to make sure this person, whoever it was, could not make their escape towards the way they had come in.

As the Vicar crept to the back of the church he passed the crib.

Oh no!

He was right to be suspicious.

How could they!

It's outrageous.

For there or rather NOT THERE was the precious figure of the baby Jesus.

Jesus was missing and the Vicar was pretty certain he / she knew who had taken the most precious and important figure out of the crib.

It was that bobble hat and squeak!

The Vicar took up position by the door, still crouched down, he / she wanted the element of surprise on this villain!

But what was that, the squeaking had stopped, paused and started up again.

What the Vicar had not seen was the bobble hat and squeak stop at the front of the church, turn round and head back the way it had come.

Now the bobble hat and squeak were heading back towards the Vicar and there was another noise – the sound of someone talking.

Blow me down the bobble hat is so confident there's no one here – they are even having a conversation.

The Vicar watched closely – the bobble hat stopped, the squeak stopped, they were right beside the crib again.

The vicar listened – he could just make out the voice. It was the voice of a child, the vicar was really confused now.

He listened and this is what he overheard.

"There you are baby Jesus, I told you that if Father Christmas brought me a bright green wheelbarrow for Christmas, you'd be the first one to have a ride in it."

The Vicar stood up, and there in front of him was a small child of about 7 or 8. In his hands was the precious figure of the baby Jesus and as he watched the child carefully placed the figure back in the manger in the crib.

The child turned, picked up the handles of the wheelbarrow and started to walk towards the door. The squeak started up immediately and as the Vicar looked up he saw the bobble hatted boy smile.

The Vicar was speechless, he moved aside, opened the door of the church as the little boy wheeled his special Christmas present past him / her. The Vicar wished the little boy a Happy Christmas and as the boy walked through the doorway he said to the Vicar.

"I hope you don't mind Vicar, but a promise to Jesus just has to kept, and I did promise that ride to Him. Happy Christmas."

Some suggestions of I Wonder questions you might use. There is no need to use them all.

"I wonder which part of that story you liked the most?"

"I wonder how the little boy felt?"

"I wonder how the Vicar felt?"

"I wonder which part of that story we could take away and still have enough of the story?"

"I wonder what that story means to you today?"

"I wonder where you might be in that story?"

## Prayer

### Leaving the hall

A few final thoughts to take away:

Remember Jesus is coming.

How will you say thank you to Him on Christmas morning?

"The Lord be with you." *"And also with you."*

### Optional evaluation using '4' questions with a small group of children.

1. Tell me one thing you liked about the Collective Worship you have just been in?
  - a. This is a personal idea just about your feelings or thoughts.
2. Tell me one thing that would have made it better for you?
  - a. This is a personal idea just about your feelings or thoughts.
3. Tell me what it was about?
  - a. This is about factual recall.
4. Tell me why did the person leading the worship do what they did? (How you phrase this depends on the age of the pupils)
  - a. So what was the point?
  - b. What do you take away?
  - c. What do we learn about how we live our lives?

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