



PORTSMOUTH and WINCHESTER DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION



Collective Worship Ideas for Gathering

Based on the revised SIAMS inspection schedule for collective worship that references four “key elements” of worship, Gathering, Engagement, Responding and Conclusion. How do we create a ceremony that changes the space used for worship (also used for lunch and PE) into a sacred place that enables the children and adults to engage in this very special part of a church school day?

SAFETY NOTE

Make sure that any activity is safe. E.g. the use of candles in worship is common make sure there are clear guidelines about the lighting, handling and extinguishing of candles.

Some gathering ideas:

- Teach a short prayerful song such as “As we are gathered Jesus is here”
- Light a candle with a prayer – “Dear God, show us who you are and how you want us to be.”
- Light a candle with a prayer – “This is a special time of our school day when God can come close to us and we can come close to God.”
- Light a candle with a prayer – “Dear God, show us who you are and how you want us to be”
- Light a candle with a prayer – “We light this candle to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world.”
- Other greetings:
 - “Peace be with you”, “And also with you”
 - “The Lord be with you”, “And also with you”
 - “Peace”, “Peace”
 - Could be based on “Sorry, Thank You, Please”
 - Could be based on the schools Distinctive Christian Values, e.g. “Dear God, help us to Love, Trust and Forgive every day and in every way.”
- Use an inspirational or though provoking image on screen as children arrive
- Use music, playing while the children arrive, that links to the theme
- Create a ceremony – a tee light in a special holder is lit in the classroom, the light is processed at the front of the class as they walk to the hall. As the school gathers all the lights are placed at the front of the hall. When the main candle is lit, the light comes from one of the class candles.
- Instead of the children forming rows in their classes, the children arrive and create vertical rows from front to back. This mixes up the classes and creates a more family feel with older and younger children sitting next to each other.
- Try to create as much of a circle as possible, in Godly Play it is described as the childrens’ sacred space. It brings the children closer and creates a more intimate feel to the assembly of people.
- Get a child to process the school banner accompanied by two candle bearers to the front when all classes are assembled.
- Start a Taize chant or other short repeating song in the classrooms and bring the song to the hall.
- Ask the children. Explain that Gathering is a key part of our school worship, what would make it special for them. See what ideas they come up with.
- Vary the gathering each half term – perhaps the gathering can reflect the cycle of the church year.

From the SIAMS Schedule for Collective Worship 2013

3. The key elements of an act of worship and the extent to which:
 - a. the gathering for worship is enhanced by, for example, music, actions or symbols and by those leading the worship
 - b. the engagement and encouragement of participants is grounded in distinctively Christian teaching
 - c. participants respond in, for example, praise, the use of silence, songs, guided reflection, prayer and also through their actions
 - d. those who lead worship provide an appropriate conclusion to the act of worship

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