



Ideas for Evaluating Collective Worship in Church Schools

In **THEORY** it would be possible to reflect after every collective worship, evaluate the various aspects of the format of the worship and make a judgement of the impact of the worship on the school community.

In **REALITY** in the busy life of a school this is almost impossible. In stating this, however, I acknowledge that good leaders and teachers:

- evaluate continuously
- reflect after every teaching and learning event and
- alter their thinking and behaviour in the future.

Self Evaluation by Pupils and Staff

Step 1

Monday - imagine that your school holds whole school worship on a Monday – led by a senior leader in the school (vicar, head, deputy, assistant head etc)

Step2

Tuesday - there is class worship.

- Class teachers are asked to discuss the previous day's worship with the class using the 4 simple questions below.
- The class teacher does not have to prepare more material but be prepared to review openly what took place and the impact and influence the worship had.
- The purpose is to discover what the pupils have remembered, understood and learned from the worship.
- If the children did not understand – the class teacher is in an ideal position to develop the ideas at an appropriate level for the class.
- Simply discussing the worship – gives it relevance and importance and for some, a better or deeper understanding.

Step 3

The class teacher now has information that can be shared verbally with the leadership at the next staff meeting. It should only take a few minutes to gather feedback from the classes.

Consequences

The children will soon realise that the school is interested in their views on worship and that worship and their views matter.

After a couple of weeks they may well be taking more note of the Monday worship – they know it will be discussed the next day.

The school is giving voice to the pupils. It is also providing them with a vocabulary and language to discuss worship.

Over time the school will be more informed about what works – has impact and influence.

The pupils and staff will better understand what the purpose of worship is and can become.

The pupils and staff will be more confident to prepare and lead worship for a class or school.

Worship will develop in the school through pupil voice and be a demonstrable aspect of the school that is both Christian and distinctive.

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The 4 simple questions to ask pupils - they really do work.

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?

Another set of Questions to ask pupils

These questions were asked by teachers of the children in their classes in a primary school.

An interactive white board was used to catch the answers provided by the children.

1. Tell us how worship makes you feel?
2. Tell us about a worship you have really enjoyed?
3. Tell us how you would like to improve worship?

Further thoughts

If the only purpose of evaluation is to provide an audit trail for inspection then the rationale is flawed – if it is to improve practice then here are some thoughts other than a daily record that could be more effective.

- Invite another adult (Vicar, governor, learning support, parent) to talk to pupils of all ages about how Collective Worship feels for them.
 - § Record the outcome of these conversations and review them with staff who lead Collective Worship, Leadership Team, the vicar or governors.
- Set aside 15 minutes of a staff meeting once a term to review how staff feel about Collective Worship.
 - § Record the outcome of these discussions and review them with staff who lead Collective Worship, Leadership Team, the vicar or governors.
- Add a question on the parent and or the pupil questionnaires about perceptions of Collective Worship.
- Invite the vicar or diocesan officer to observe a Collective Worship and spend quality time afterwards to discuss the various aspects of the worship.
- Invite a diocesan officer to review the overall planning of worship.
- Video a Collective Worship and watch and reflect on it yourself. You could place the camera on the floor pointing upwards so it captures a child's eye view.