



Collective Worship Policy

This is a Trust Policy– details specific to individual academies and their procedures are added by the academy in the *Appendices*. *(For a copy of the policy for a specific academy which includes the Appendices – see the individual academy website).*

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|-------------------------------------|
| March 2022 |
| Date for Next Revision – March 2024 |

Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (the Trust) and all its academies (the Academy / Academies) is committed to the flourishing of all, and the Trust’s vision is:

‘For every child, within our Trust, to experience an excellent education and to realise their God-given potential to flourish.’

Rationale

The Trust understands collective worship to be an essential component within an educational experience that enables all pupils to flourish. It provides an opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter and appreciate the relevance of faith in the world today. Collective worship involves pupils and staff coming together and participating in a daily gathering. In Community Schools in line with the 1988 Education Reform Act collective worship should be “wholly or broadly of a Christian character”. Collective worship in our Church Academies is required to reflect its Anglican status as expressed in their trust deed, and so will be based on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. However, we aim to conduct our collective worship in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the academy.

Collective worship contributes significantly to the Christian ethos of the Trust. In doing so, it seeks to provide an inclusive, invitational and inspiring experience for all members of our academies by providing opportunities for each Academy to:

- Explore its Christian vision and underpinning values and virtues;
- Deepen a sense of community through sharing its common aims, values and morals;
- Consider current national and world events as they occur;
- Celebrate achievement and special times;
- Explore together the world in which we live;
- Develop a community spirit.

Aims for Collective Worship

The aims and purpose of collective worship are based on the *Church of England Education Office’s Inclusive Invitational Inspiring: A Statement of Entitlement and Expectation* (a copy of which is attached at *Appendix 1*), that it is:

Inclusive by:

- Ensuring it is accessible to pupils and adults of different faith backgrounds, those exploring their own beliefs about faith and those of no faith;
- Providing time for reflection so nurturing the awareness of life as a spiritual journey;
- Involving pupils in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship;
- Reflecting the cultural backgrounds of the local context.

Invitational by:

- Enabling all to be present whatever their faith or beliefs;
- Recognising that pupils and adults are free to engage with integrity;
- Providing optional invitations for prayer and space to reflect.

Inspiring by:

- Enabling pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we are here;
- Motivating pupils and adults into action and into the possibilities of thinking and behaving differently;
- Encouraging pupils to become courageous advocates for change.

For further details of an individual Academy's aims and purpose of collective worship – see *Appendix 2*.

Practicalities of Organisation

Our Academies hold a daily act of collective worship.

For Academy specific details – see *Appendix 2*.

Content

A plan of themes is produced annually reflecting the values an Academy has chosen.

Our Academies also consider and reflect on the festivals and special times of the Christian calendar.

For academy specific details – see *Appendix 2*.

Resources

For details of resources individual Academies use – see *Appendix 2*.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

It is the role of the Academy Governance Committee (AGC) to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. As part of this, pupil interviews are carried out / pupil evaluation forms are reviewed.

Any Academy specific details in relation to evaluation, monitoring and review are set out in *Appendix 2*.

Right of Withdrawal

As our Academies are Church Academies, we expect all pupils to attend collective worship, and we discuss this with parents / carers at the time of admission. However, any parent / carer can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship and the academy will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the pupil during the period concerned. Parents / carers do not have to explain or give reasons for this. This complies with current legislation. The Headteacher keeps a record of any pupils who are withdrawn from collective worship.

Appendix 1



Collective Worship in Church of England Schools

Inclusive Invitational Inspiring

Guidance Document

Introduction

Church of England schools are committed to offering high quality collective worship. They are places that recognise and value collective worship as central to fostering a sense of community and to expressing the school's Christian vision. In practice this means that structure, planning, evaluation, participation, collaboration, and inspection of worship are all taken seriously by the school and by diocesan authorities.

This document has been produced to challenge, to guide and set expectations for Church school communities and diocesan authorities encouraging them to reflect on their practice and to ensure that collective worship remains the relevant and essential component of an education that enables all pupils to flourish and to 'live life in all its fullness' John 10:10.

In Church of England schools, collective worship is seen as more than a daily 'awe and wonder' moment. It is the unique heartbeat of the school and is offered as part of a wider opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.

We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity, and we are committed to offering them an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice in a way that enhances their lives...Collective worship in schools, including prayer, reading and reflecting on the Bible, liturgy, sacrament and experience of the musical and other imaginative riches of Christianity, provide a vital opportunity for this.¹

This form of encounter through worship should be truly welcoming, inclusive and exemplifying the principles of Christian hospitality. This is an approach that seeks to meet the needs of all, wherever they may be on their journey of faith and belief.

¹ The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. (The Church of England Education Office 2016) page 10

www.churchofengland.org/education

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Collective Worship and the Law

Collective worship in community schools is grounded in the historical past and enshrined in educational law to be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character'². In Church schools the requirement instead to reflect the Anglican status of the school as expressed in its trust deed liberates those leading collective worship to build on the rich, lived diversity of Anglican tradition and identity. In the same way as worship in churches is aspirational, constantly evolving and being re-imagined there is an expectation of a continuous, dynamic reimagining of what collective worship means in the Church school.

Inclusive, Invitational, and Inspiring

Inclusive: Worship is collective in that it involves meeting, exploring, questioning, and responding to others and, for some, to God. In the Church school pupils, their families and other adults can expect to encounter worship that is inclusive of, and fully accessible to, all. Many pupils and staff in our schools will come from homes of different faith backgrounds as well as of no faith background. Moreover, many pupils will naturally be at different stages of their spiritual journey during their time in school. Pupils should be given the opportunity to think and ask questions. There should be space to consent, and dissent: to participate and to stand back; and to consider. It is an expectation that care will be taken to ensure that the language used by those facilitating worship avoids assuming faith in all those participating, listening and watching.

Collective worship should not be 'done to' but will involve meaningful contributions from the whole school community, including pupils. It is recognised that pupils will bring their own experience to worship. Inclusion requires pupil involvement in planning, leading and the evaluation of worship. Although part of a national legislative framework, collective worship in the Church school grows out of the local context and out of pupils' experience, including their cultural backgrounds.

Invitational: Parents, pupils and adults can expect to encounter worship that is consistently invitational. There should be no compulsion to 'do anything'. Rather, worship should provide the opportunity to engage whilst allowing the freedom of those of different faiths and those who profess no religious faith to be present and to engage with integrity. The metaphor of 'warm fires and open doors'³ captures this idea. The warmth of the fire derives from the clarity and authenticity of the Christian message at its heart. There is no value to an encounter with a watered down, lowest common denominator version of faith. Importantly the door is open, all are welcome to come in and sit as near or as far away from the fire as they feel comfortable. Pupils and adults should always only be invited to pray if they wish to do so and should be invited to pray in their own way. Prayer should always be accompanied by the option to reflect.

Music and liturgies⁴ used in worship should reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship, it should connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used should reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community.

² Education Reform Act 1988 section 7(1) and the corresponding section of the Education Act 1993

³ Speech by David Thomson, Bishop of Huntingdon 2014 quoted in *The Fruits of the Spirit: A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education* (The Church of England Education Office 2015) page 13

⁴ Where there are joint schools the liturgies should reflect this status

Care should be taken with the music and liturgy: the traditional and modern riches of Christian hymnody and music will be drawn upon, but schools should think about what is most appropriate, at a given time, for the spiritual life of their particular community.

Inspiring: Pupils and adults can expect the worship they encounter in a Church school to be inspirational. Worship should be formational and transformational: it should enable pupils and adults to ask big questions about who we are and why we do what we do. It should motivate pupils and adults into action, into thinking differently, and into reflecting on their and the wider community's behaviour and actions. As a result of inspirational collective worship, they should be inspired to become courageous advocates of causes. It should encourage them to think searchingly about their faith, beliefs and/or philosophical convictions.

There will always be those who are uncomfortable to enter through this open door of worship in our schools and so the Church of England recognises the right of withdrawal from collective worship for those parents or pupils⁵ who wish to exercise this option. This, and how to exercise this choice, should be explained fully in the school's collective worship policy and referenced on the school's website.

Aims and objectives

The aspiration to provide collective worship that is Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring is underpinned by the following aims and objectives and will be monitored and quality assured through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools⁶ (SIAMS)

Collective worship in a Church of England school will do the following:

- Explore the school's vision and how that underpins shared values and virtues. In doing so, it will reflect on moral values such as compassion, gratitude, justice, humility, forgiveness and reconciliation; and develop virtues such as resilience, determination and creativity that develop character and contribute to academic progress.
- Help pupils and adults to appreciate the relevance of faith in today's world by encountering the teachings of Jesus and the Bible and developing understanding of the Christian belief in the trinitarian nature of God.
- Offer the opportunity, without compulsion, to all pupils and adults to grow spiritually through experiences of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection.
- Enable all pupils and adults to appreciate that Christians worship in different ways, for example using music, silence, story, prayer, reflection, as well as through the varied liturgical and other traditions of Anglican worship, festivals and, where appropriate, the Eucharist.
- Enable pupils to develop skills through engaging in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship in ways that lead to improving practice.

⁵ Under Section 55 of the Education and Inspections Act, it remains the case that only pupils in sixth form education or over the age of compulsory school age (Section 55. 9) may withdraw themselves from collective worship.

⁶ The Church of England Education Office, *Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Evaluation Schedule* (The National Society 2018)

Provision

The rhythm of daily worship allows pupils and adults to step away from the target-driven culture of much of education, creating a space for an encounter with faith in God. It also provides the opportunity to reflect on larger questions of meaning and purpose. Pupils and adults can expect that the school's collective worship practices will provide a shared set of symbols, signs, words and actions which give the community a language upon which it can draw, in times of joy and grief. Such an experience is key to fostering a sense of fellowship and cohesion within the school community. Whether in times of crisis or celebration, this time set aside in the school day provides staff and pupils with the opportunity to gather and support one another as a community.

Throughout the year, Church school communities may meet to celebrate and mark certain seasons in the Church calendar, such as Lent and Advent. Other important events in the school year, such as the start and end of the academic year, may be marked by formal acts of collective worship. Pupils and adults will encounter the practice of regular prayer and worship as a normal part of the life of the school. These activities will help provide a rhythm and stillness as a pattern of community life.

Parents, pupils and adults can expect that worship in a Church school will follow a recognisable structure that will help focus worship on one idea. This helps to give organisation and clarity to the unfolding of that idea, as well as helping the leader to ensure that worship is age-appropriate and moves away from making it a performance art. This could take the form of a welcome or prayer followed by a consideration of a Bible passage or story that the group can then reflect on through discussion, prayer, silent reflection or music. It will be something that pupils and adults may want to share and discuss with others in school, in the community and at home.

Developing staff expertise and knowledge: Confidence through professionalism

Parents, pupils and adults are entitled to be led in worship by those who have a secure understanding of the nature of collective worship in a Church school context and by those who are professional in their approach to working with pupils and adults from all faiths and none. Therefore, it should be a priority to build up the expertise of staff, pupils, clergy and other adults in facilitating collective worship in Church schools. To do this the school should ensure the following.

- Worship leaders, including clergy, should have access to regular training, primarily through local diocesan education teams.
- Pupil worship leaders should be supported, encouraged and resourced to contribute meaningful acts of worship.
- Worship leaders, including clergy, should have access to high quality and current resources.
- The governing body should have robust systems in place to monitor the impact of worship effectively; this monitoring will include and meaningfully involve pupil voice. Those facilitating worship should have the opportunity to receive feedback and to hear the outcome of evaluation.
- Those from outside agencies and church groups invited into the school to facilitate

worship should be trained and properly briefed about the school, its pupil context and the school's vision. They should be supported and monitored as part of the school's systems for the evaluation of the impact of worship.

- There should be a named member of staff responsible for collective worship with responsibility for ensuring that appropriate policy and practice are in place and publicly available.

Collective Worship and Growing Faith⁷

Church schools owe their existence to the vision of Joshua Watson and the founding of the National Society, and their trust deeds to the foresight of past church communities. The local church community, through its foundation and ex officio governors, are inheritors and guardians of the school's historic trust deed. This involves honouring tradition while re-imagining how this might look today. Today this has found new expression in the 'Growing Faith adventure'.

'Growing Faith' promotes a partnership between the three local communities of church, school and household to provide space to talk of faith & spiritual matters or ask challenging questions within and between these three communities.

Three principles exemplify this approach:

- **Connected Communities:** looking for meaningful community connections in the intersection between church, school and household.
- **Encounters with God:** encountering faith and belief by engaging in conversations about God as individuals and together.
- **Imaginative practices:** searching for 'a new way of being church' and creating new thinking and new doing in relation to children, young people and households.

This has been described as developing 'faith talk' in the 'Faith in the Nexus' report⁸. Specifically, the Church school is a place for 'faith talk' where Encounters with God may happen. The 'Growing Faith adventure is not part of the SIAMS schedule but the local church should normally expect to be part of a church school partnership that encourages and supports the school in effectively developing the impact of and provision for worship. Families can also expect to be partners in collective worship: involved, informed and enabled to collaborate at home if they should wish.

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⁷ <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/growing-faith>

⁸ National Institute for Christian Research in Education, Christchurch Canterbury, *Faith in the Nexus*, (November 2020) [Faith In The Nexus \(nicer.org.uk\)](http://Faith In The Nexus (nicer.org.uk))

Appendix 2

Name of Academy: Braunston CE Primary School

Academy specific details

Our Vision

“Learning for Life in all its fullness” John 10:10

At Braunston, we aspire to offer a rounded and fulfilling education, underpinned by our values and driven by our aims of ‘Learning for life in all its fullness’. John 10:10. We strive to facilitate academic excellence and are ambitious in our pursuit of developing children who are confident, literate and socially and emotionally resilient.

Children are educated within a distinctively Christian ethos which provides them with opportunities to realise their full potential and are grounded in British values, equipped for a diverse world.

We are building what we value and everything we do demonstrates ‘We Care’. Our six school values of relationships, reconciliation, responsibility, respect and reverence, resilience and reflection are all underpinned by our one all encompassing ethos of ‘We Care’. Adults and children are known and loved and our vision guides us to live our values every day and inspire a love of learning.

Aims for Collective Worship

In addition to the aims already stated, at Braunston School collective worship is at the heart of our life and work. We provide an opportunity for pupils and staff to experience worship in a traditional Christian style, which is consistent with the traditional beliefs and practices of the Church of England.

Practicalities of Organisation

Our daily act of collective worship forms part of our daily assembly. The format for these is agreed annually and an example is in Appendix 3.

We conduct collective worship in a dignified and respectful way. We encourage pupils to think of worship as a special time when the school community comes together for a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect them to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teaching. We invite them to participate in prayer and songs. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music and a cross and candle that acts as a focal point for the attention of the pupils.

The Headteacher and other members of staff conduct collective worship and on Wednesdays, a member of the Church Team leads. This brings greater variety to our worship times and strengthens links between the Academy and the local church. Members of The Lighthouse Trust also lead regular collective worship. Parents / carers are invited to special services, e.g. at Christmas, Easter and the end of the academy year.

This promotes the community spirit of the Academy. We welcome governors' attendance at our collective worship at any time.

Worship opportunities are also offered to staff, children and their families as we attend services at All Saints Church Braunston.

Content

The values we have chosen as an Academy are Relationships, Reconciliation, Responsibility, Respect and Reverence, Resilience and Reflection.

A daily record is kept of all acts of worship, recording themes covered and songs / music used. We also hold collective worship that reflects the achievements and learning of the pupils. We encourage the pupils to participate in collective worship by showing their work to others and sharing issues that they have discussed in their classes. Collective worship offers an opportunity to acknowledge and reward pupils for their achievements both in and out of the Academy. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the Academy, which is that all pupils are valued and all achievements recognised.

Resources

Roots and Fruits from Imaginor Publications with every assembly following the four elements of Welcome, Learning, Reflecting and Responding and First Picture News is also used as source material

Useful websites to be used include:

www.imaginer.co.uk

www.worshipworkshop.co.uk

www.barnabusinschools.org.uk

Appendix 3

An example of the format of a daily act of collective worship.

Assembly Rota Autumn 1 2022-23

Please ensure you have a worship table for assemblies. You could use your Values table.

| Day | Time | Assembly | Led by |
|-----------|---|--|-----------------|
| Monday | 1.10pm | First Chapter Club | H Lawson |
| | 2.55pm KS2 | First Chapter Club | M-Smith |
| | Every 3 rd week (see dates below) | Diversity, equality, inclusion Assembly | N Sawyer |
| Tuesday | 2.55pm | First News: Understanding the world around us. | Class Teachers |
| Wednesday | 9.05 am Whole School | Collective Worship | The church team |
| | 2.55pm Whole School | Singing Assembly | J Goodridge |
| Thursday | 2.55pm Whole School | Christian Values using Roots and Fruits. | A Pryce |
| Friday | 9.05am Whole school | Celebration assembly | Mrs Willis |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Week beginning Monday | Collective Worship: Christian Values using Roots and Fruits. Each CW assembly is supported by resources including posters, songs, dramas etc www.imaginer.co.uk PW RaF14img7 |
| | RELATIONSHIPS |
| | Roots and Shoots – Friendship and Compassion |
| 7 th September | Sticking together: Proverbs 18.24, p97 |
| 14 th September | Encourage one another and build each other up: 1 Thess 5.11, p100 |
| 21 st September | Supporting one another: Luke 5.17-39, p103 |
| 28 th September | Making time for each other: Luke 10.38-42, p106 |
| 5 th October | Learning to listen: Proverbs 17.17, p109 |
| 12 th October | Noticing a need: Mark 6.34, p33 |
| 19 th October | Being a good neighbour: Luke 10.25-37, p36 |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------|
| Ordinary Time | 7 June 2020 – 21 Nov 2020 | Green |
| Christ the King | 22 Nov 2020 – 28 Nov 2020 | White |
| Advent | 29 Nov 2020 – 24 Dec 2020 | Purple |
| Christmas & Epiphany | 25 Dec 2020 – 2 Feb 2021 | White or Gold |
| After Epiphany | 3 Feb 2021 – 16 Feb 2021 | Green |
| Lent | 17 Feb 2021 – 2 April 2021 | Purple |
| Eastertide | 3 April 2021 – 22 May 2021 | White or Gold |
| Pentecost | 23 May 2021 | Red |
| Ordinary time | 30 May 2021 – 20 Nov 2021 | Green |
| Christ the King | 21 Nov 2021 – 27 Nov 2021 | White |
| Saints Days | St David – March 1, St Patrick – March 17, St George - April 23, St Andrew - Nov 30 | Red |



Dates for the Year 2022-23 Autumn 1

| Date | Day of Week | Assembly | Person |
|----------|-------------|---|----------|
| 26.09.22 | Monday | Diversity, equality, inclusion Assembly | N Sawyer |
| 05.10.22 | Wednesday | Harvest Assembly | Visitor |
| 06.10.22 | Thursday | Islam Assembly (1.00 -1.30pm) | Visitor |
| 17.10.22 | Monday | Diversity, equality, inclusion Assembly | N Sawyer |
| 07.11.22 | Monday | Diversity, equality, inclusion Assembly | N Sawyer |
| 28.11.22 | Monday | Diversity, equality, inclusion Assembly | N Sawyer |
| | | | |

QUOTES & QUESTIONS

Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes **courage** is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow.
(Mary Anne Radmacher)

Courage is not the absence of fear. It is acting in spite of it.
(Mark Twain)

? Can you remember a time when you thought I've just got to keep trying?

? Everyone feels scared sometimes. Have you ever overcome your fears and achieved something that you're proud of?

A person cannot discover new oceans unless he has the **courage** to lose sight of the shore.
(André Gide)

If you have the **courage** to begin, you have the **courage** to succeed.
(David Viscott)

? When did you last step outside your comfort zone to try something new?

? Do you need **courage** to make a start on something new?

FORGIVENESS

BEGINNING AGAIN

WORSHIP TABLE

- 3 candles and a Bible open at today's story, Luke 15:11-32
- Worship cloth or table runner, colour corresponding to the Church season (for further information see www.imaginor.co.uk/church-year)
- Forgiveness poster from page 73 (laminated and on a stand)
- Party poppers and balloons

PREPARATION AND RESOURCES

- 5 children, rehearsed, to present the dramatic reading
- The Return of the Prodigal Son, *painting by Rembrandt*
- Talk partners will be needed

Black text - Leader's script / Red text - Instructions and guidance for leader



Welcome

Fade the assembly music and light the three candles on the Worship Table, as the following words are spoken:

WELCOME WORDS 1

We come together now into the presence of:
God the Father who judges with justice,
God the Son who offers **forgiveness** and
God the Holy Spirit who helps us to begin again.

WELCOME WORDS 2

We have gathered in the name of
God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
to worship together
and think about our value
forgiveness.

OR

Jesus often used parables to teach people about important truths. One of the best known parables is called The Prodigal Son or The Lost Son. However, this parable teaches us more about the father in the story than the son. We are going to **look, listen** and **ask questions** to try to explore why Jesus told the story.

Show Rembrandt's painting of *The Return of the Prodigal Son*.



Look carefully at this picture. It was painted almost 350 years ago by the artist Rembrandt and is one of the most famous pictures in the world.

What do you think is happening in this scene?

Does the way the characters in the picture are dressed give us any clues as to who they might be?

Do you think the people in the picture know one another?

What might they be thinking about each other?



Learning

Listen to this dramatic reading of the parable, which inspired Rembrandt to paint the picture.

5 children read the story

DRAMATIC READING THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON based on Luke 15:11-32

- Jesus:** There was once a man who had two sons. One day the younger son went up to his father and said,
- Younger son:** Give me my share of the family money.
- Jesus:** So the father divided his wealth between the two sons.
- Not long after, the younger son packed up all he had and left his family and went to a far away country. While he was there he wasted all this money and lived a very wild life.
- The time came when he had spent all his money and had nothing left not even enough to buy food. So he decided to work for someone who sent him to look after pigs. He was so hungry that he was tempted to eat the rotten food that he was giving to the pigs.
- Then he began to think to himself,
- Younger son:** My father's servants have enough food to eat, and here am I dying from hunger. I will go back to my father and say 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am not fit to be called your son. Please make me one of your servants.'
- Jesus:** So he got up and began the journey home.
- While he was still a long way off, his father saw him. He was filled with love for his son and ran to meet him. He threw his arms around him and hugged him.
- Younger son:** Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am not fit to be called your son...
- Jesus:** But the father said to his servants,
- Father:** Quick, bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Prepare the fattest calf. Let us have a big feast and celebrate. This son of mine was lost, but now he is found!
- Jesus:** Meanwhile the older son was in the field and asked a servant,
- Older son:** What's happening?
- Servant:** Your father has killed the fattest calf and is celebrating because your brother is home again and is safe.
- Jesus:** The older brother became angry and refused to join in the party. So the father went out to him.
- Father:** Please come and join us!
- Older son:** All these years I have worked for you like a slave and done everything you asked me to, but you have never given a party for me and my friends. But now, this son of yours who has wasted all your money comes home, and you kill the fattest calf for him.

Father: My son, you are always with me and everything I have is yours. However, we have to celebrate and be happy now, because your brother was lost but now he is found!

© Teachers notes from The Foolish Father, The Parables Project, Diocese of Exeter

Jesus usually told parables to teach one truth.

Which of the characters do you think is meant to represent God in the story?

What do you think is the one truth that Jesus wants us to learn about God?



Reflecting

One of the ways that we learn best is to **ask questions**.

Do you have a question either about Jesus' parable or about Rembrandt's painting?

Talk to your partner about your questions.

Ask if any of the children want to share their questions. Teachers' notes giving some helpful background to this story may be found in Appendix 4.



Responding

A NEW BEGINNING PRAYER

Father God,
You are always ready to **forgive**.
Make us always ready to receive your **forgiveness**
And to make a new beginning.
Amen

   **Fruits from the Roots**   

PARABLE PLAYS

In a drama lesson invite the children to place the parable of The Prodigal Son in a modern setting. Different groups could be given different parts of the story, which could then be enacted in chronological order. *Hot seating* could be used as a device to explore the story with younger children.

         

FORGIVENESS

PUTTING THE PAST BEHIND US

WORSHIP TABLE

- 3 candles and a Bible open at today's verse, Psalm 32.1
- Worship cloth or table runner, colour corresponding to the Church season (for further information see www.imaginer.co.uk/church-year)
- Forgiveness poster from page 73 (laminated and on a stand)
- A Lego® model

PREPARATION AND RESOURCES

- Boy and girl puppets (Barney & Bella) and puppet theatre, cloth or table for the puppeteers to hide behind

Black text - Leader's script / Red text - Instructions and guidance for leader



Welcome

Fade the assembly music and light the three candles on the Worship Table, as the following words are spoken:

WELCOME WORDS 1

We come together now into the presence of:
God the Father who judges with justice,
God the Son who offers **forgiveness** and
God the Holy Spirit who helps us to begin again.

WELCOME WORDS 2

We have gathered in the name of
God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
to worship together
and think about our value
forgiveness.

In the Bible there is a book of songs and poetry called Psalms. The following words are from Psalm 32.

"Happy are those whose sins are forgiven, whose wrongs are pardoned." Psalm 32.1

The psalmist tells us that **forgiveness** brings peace of mind and happiness. But first, there are three little words that are very important to say to the person who has been upset.

Can you think what they are?
(I am sorry.)

But 'I am sorry' is just half of the story. What comes next?
(I forgive you.)

Let's hear what Barney and Bella have been up to.



Learning

Two puppeteers operate puppets Barney and Bella from behind a screen or table covered with a cloth.



- Bella: Hi Barney, where have you been? I haven't seen you for ages!
- Barney: *(Looks the other way)*
- Bella: What's the matter? Aren't you speaking to me?
- Barney: *(Shakes his head and looks the other way)*
- Bella: *(Sadly)* Oh dear. Are you still mad at me for knocking over your model and breaking it?
- Barney: *(Shakes his head)*
- Bella: Are you sure?
- Barney: *(Nods head and then shakes head)*
- Bella: Oh dear, Barney, you are still cross with me? But I did say I was sorry, and I did help you clear up, and I did offer to help you build a new one.
- Barney: But I still feel really cross when I think about it. Whenever I see you all I can think about is those hundreds of tiny bricks all over the floor and how long it took me to make that model!
- Bella: Please **forgive** me! I don't like it when you're not talking to me.
- Barney: I know, I'm trying.
- Bella: Why don't you remember something good instead, like when we had fun last weekend in the playground?
- Barney: Yes, you're right. Our friendship is more important than being cross. I really do **forgive** you Bella, and I'm going to try to forget all about it.
- Bella: We could go and try to make another model like your first one.
- Barney: First model. Which one was that?
- They both laugh and run off.*

Reflecting

If we hold on to the hurt feelings they can damage our friendships. We call it bearing a grudge. Barney bore a grudge against Bella even though she had apologised.

Clench your fists as tightly as you can. Your fist is a picture of how people feel inside when they are bearing a grudge. It is difficult to offer the hand of friendship with a clenched fist and it is difficult to be a good friend if you are bearing a grudge. Now open your hands and hold them in front of you as we say our prayer.

Responding

PRAYING WITH OPEN HANDS

Dear Lord, Thank you that you **forgive** us completely. When people hurt us, please help us not to hold grudges, and instead, ask for your strength to **forgive**. Amen.



Fruits from the Roots

OPEN HANDS AND CLENCHED FISTS!

Make a wall display of hands and fists.

On the open hands write words of **forgiveness**, such as "I'll give you another chance", "I **forgive** you", "Let's make a fresh start" and on the fists negative feelings that we can bottle up, such as "You always mess up", "You are to blame" or "It's not my fault".

