



Spirituality Practices at St James

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Learning together with courage
and kindness
'For the good of all' 1 Corinthians 12



Intent:

At St James, pupils and staff together have defined spirituality as: **taking time to think, question and enjoy all that life has to offer beyond the everyday.**

We see spirituality as a vital part of being human. For some spirituality comes very naturally, while for others it is something that must be learnt and practised. It benefits everyone to make time in the day to be spiritual, particularly in such a busy world.

As a school with a church foundation, we have a particular Christian understanding of spirituality, which is rooted in our vision from 1 Corinthians 12 – **To enable all to flourish to be the best they can be for the good of all.**

Our vision 'for the good of all' comes from the idea that everyone has differences, but if we support each other and come together everyone is better off. Just like the parts of the body, every part is important and must be cared for. Developing spirituality is an important part of this vision, so that everyone has a sense of themselves and an understanding of others.

We follow in the example of St James, for whom our school is named. He, through his journey from fisherman to devoted friend of Jesus and finally to messenger of God's word, demonstrated his commitment, his courage and his kindness in a way that is an inspiration to every member of this school.

Our values of community, courage and kindness have been carefully chosen to support the children to develop strong relationships and a sense of belonging. We believe that we are stronger together as part of a community. Children know the importance of being kind even to those who we might find challenging. Courageous advocacy is celebrated so that children feel empowered and know that their voice matters and is heard.

We aim to support children to develop:

- Personal reflection: Children can reflect on their beliefs, values and experiences.
- Healthy relationships: Children foster healthy relationships with others and have the skills to manage conflict.
- Awe and wonder: Children are curious and have a sense of wonder about life and the world around them.

Implementation:

Our practices support the children to develop these aims through both personal and collective expressions of spirituality, including:

- **Collective Worship:** allows for spirituality to be practised together as a community. Collective worship should enable everyone to develop spiritually through the invitation that is offered to every member of the school community to share together in prayer, singing, contemplation and community worship in all its forms. This includes Open the Book, Church-led Collective Worship, Values Collective Worship and Celebration Collective Worship (see Appendix B for current schedule).
- As a school we have services in church at special points in the Christian calendar throughout the year to allow everyone to come together to experience spirituality in a sacred space. Collective Worship also takes place outside to experience the beauty of nature.

- **Spaces for personal and collective worship in our school grounds:**

- Working with the Wantage Deanery Chaplaincy Partnership Lead, spaces have been developed for pupils to pray, reflect and contemplate both inside and outside of school.

- These include:

- A peace garden & reading garden with a willow dome
- A journey of stepping stones as a mini-pilgrimage, that were made by the children
- A Cabin to provide an indoor calm, comfortable, quiet space to be during lunchtimes
- Our Harbour a mindful relaxing space for regulating emotions
- Our Lighthouse with a space for children to spend time with our Home School Link Worker
- Our Forest School area

- **Reflective practices:** allow children to develop their individual spirituality through more personal and reflective means. These include:

- Space Makers: Our headteacher has attended training in the ODBE Space Makers Contemplative Toolkit. This has then been disseminated to all staff for use across the school. This resource may be used for small group, class or larger collective worship. In addition, each classroom has a reflection stand that supports personal use of these practices. Space Makers draws on Ignatian spirituality and includes five practices:

Stilling Noticing Dwelling Mending Blessing



- Prayer Space: We hold opportunities for pupils to experience prayer spaces every year led by St James the Great Church & BeSpace. The children also experience an immersion event in school arranged by Hanney Chapel.

- Our outside space is very special at St James and is used as often as possible. Lunchtime play allows for different ways to develop spirituality, from adventure and discovery on the field to reflection time in our peace garden and creativity in our Cabin.

- **Curriculum:** We use a mix of Discovery RE and ODBE RE units, which we have chosen based on their enquiry-based approach that allows for spirituality and self-reflection. Children gain knowledge of a range of religions while considering their own beliefs. Our curriculum has been designed to promote spirituality with the drivers of: curiosity, empathy and adventure. Our pedagogical approach also allows for spiritual development with an emphasis on questioning, thinking and oracy. Our PSHE curriculum, Jigsaw PSHE, reminds us all to be mindful, to pause, and to notice and experience the spiritual in the midst of the activity and busyness of a normal school day – and to recognise the importance, significance and impact of spirituality in our lives. Spontaneous moments of spirituality are encouraged, particularly in subjects such as music, art, geography and science.

- **Out in the World:** Enrichment activities include a wide range of out of school visits from farms to the seaside and museums, which provide pupils with the opportunity to experience awe and wonder in the World. We share in regular Collective Worship that are based on events around the world using the resource Picture News. We also raise money for charities both locally and abroad, such as through Comic Relief and Samaritan's Purse.

- **Participation:** Parents have a right to withdraw their children from attending Collective Worship, in general or in part, and the school will immediately give effect to such a request. Parents are not obliged

to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal. However, the school will invite parents to discuss Collective Worship and the alternative arrangements for their child.

Impact:

To ensure effectiveness of our delivery, we measure and check the impact of our practices through:

- **Surveys and feedback:** Regular surveys of pupils, parents, and staff.
- **Observations and assessments:** Teachers observe and assess students' behaviour, relationships, and engagement.
- **Community involvement:** Monitoring student participation in community and school events.
- **Academic and personal development:** Tracking improvements in academic performance and personal development.

These measures help us continually refine our approach to spirituality, ensuring it remains a vibrant and integral part of our students' education and personal development at St James.

Appendix A – Defining Spirituality

Spirituality can be defined through a series of statements or descriptions:

- Spirituality is our attempt to find meaning and purpose to life.
- Spirituality is seeking to find, meet or experience something that is beyond us and our own physical senses and experiences.
- Spirituality includes our perception of the eternal and the divine.
- Spirituality is an essential part of being human. We all have a need for spirituality that appears to be an innate characteristic of every human civilisation throughout history. (If we ignore the existence of this aspect of who we are, we are denying our children, families and staff the opportunity to grow spiritually during their time with us and to integrate all the other elements of their experience of school with this vital part of what makes us human.)

Spirituality includes the biggest questions we might ask:

- Is there a God?
- What happens when I die?
- What is the purpose of life?
- Considering these questions and their answers, how then do I live my life and treat other people?
- Is there such a thing as absolute truth?
- Where does morality come from, and how do I tell right from wrong?
- What do other people believe about God, existence and eternity?
- If there is a God, does God know me and see me?
- What is prayer? Do prayers ever get answered?
- Why is there suffering and evil in the world?
- Is there any point in being good?
- What is worship, is it important, how do I do it, and why might I want to?

Spirituality is relational and is not only *formed by our relationships*, families and traditions – thereby creating a sense of identity, meaning and belonging – but also *relationship forming* in the way we see, meet and connect with other people.

Appendix B: Collective Worship at St James

Collective worship is an essential element of helping us to fulfil our vision at St James CE Primary School. Our vision of 'for the good of all' is expressed, deepened, developed and celebrated through our collective worship.

Collective worship should enable everyone to develop spiritually through the invitation that is offered to every member of the school community to share together in prayer, singing, contemplation and collective worship in all its forms.

The leadership of collective worship is shared between staff, pupils, our local church ministers, members of the Open the Book team and visitors.

Weekly Collective Worship

Monday	Values collective worship 2:40-3:00pm
Tuesday	Open the Book collective worship 9:10-9:30am
Wednesday	Class collective worship (Space Makers) afternoon
Thursday	Church-led collective worship 2:40-3:00pm
Friday	Celebration collective worship 2:30-3:00pm

Collective Worship Throughout the Year

We plan collective worship to include the following topics over a year:

- Our values: Community, Courage and Kindness
- Our vision
- Key festivals of the church year
- National celebrations/special days
- Current affairs/British Values
- World views
- Picture News resource

Attending St James the Great Church

We attend St James the Great Church at least four times a year.

- Harvest festival – children bring donations of food for the local food bank/ all children perform a poem or song – all parents invited
- Christingle service – all children make a Christingle in school and all families are invited
- Easter service – Open the book & readings by school and church community – all parents invited
- Leavers' service – Year 6 song, memories, pebble & candle ceremony with buddies – Year 6 parents invited