

Singing Worship - Day 5

Song is a tremendous way in which many access and express their spirituality. It provides a rich opportunity to connect and reflect both individually and as a school community, as voices are lifted and words sung. With this in mind, we are pleased to include within the 'Heart for the Earth' resources a plan per instalment which focuses on sung worship.

The singing worship plan found below follows that of the commonly used 'Gather, Engage, Respond, Send' (GERS) framework for collective worship. This helps:

- ensure that this time together is explicitly an act of collective worship, and
- that an opportunity is provided for some of the words within the song – and related themes – to be explored

This latter aspect is key in the light of the guidance and three main principles of collective worship in Church of England schools^[1]. As the guidance document (2021, pp. 2-3) notes:

Music...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.

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.

[1] Church of England Education Office. Collective Worship in Church of England Schools Guidance Document Inclusive, Invitational, Inspiring: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf>

Within the 'engage' section, some of the words and themes of the song are explored. Each of the songs suggested within the 'Heart for the Earth' worship plans link to the theology of a 'community of creation' and head, heart, hands framework which underpin each of the published resources[2]; this is in contrast to those songs which espouse a 'dominion' view[3]. Through exploring a small selection of verses of the song, it allows the school community to further understand the Christian themes expressed within them. Individuals can then make their own choice as to whether they choose to sing all of the song, parts of the song or whether they would prefer to listen and reflect. This option and agency maintains both the distinctively Christian and deeply invitational nature of collective worship.

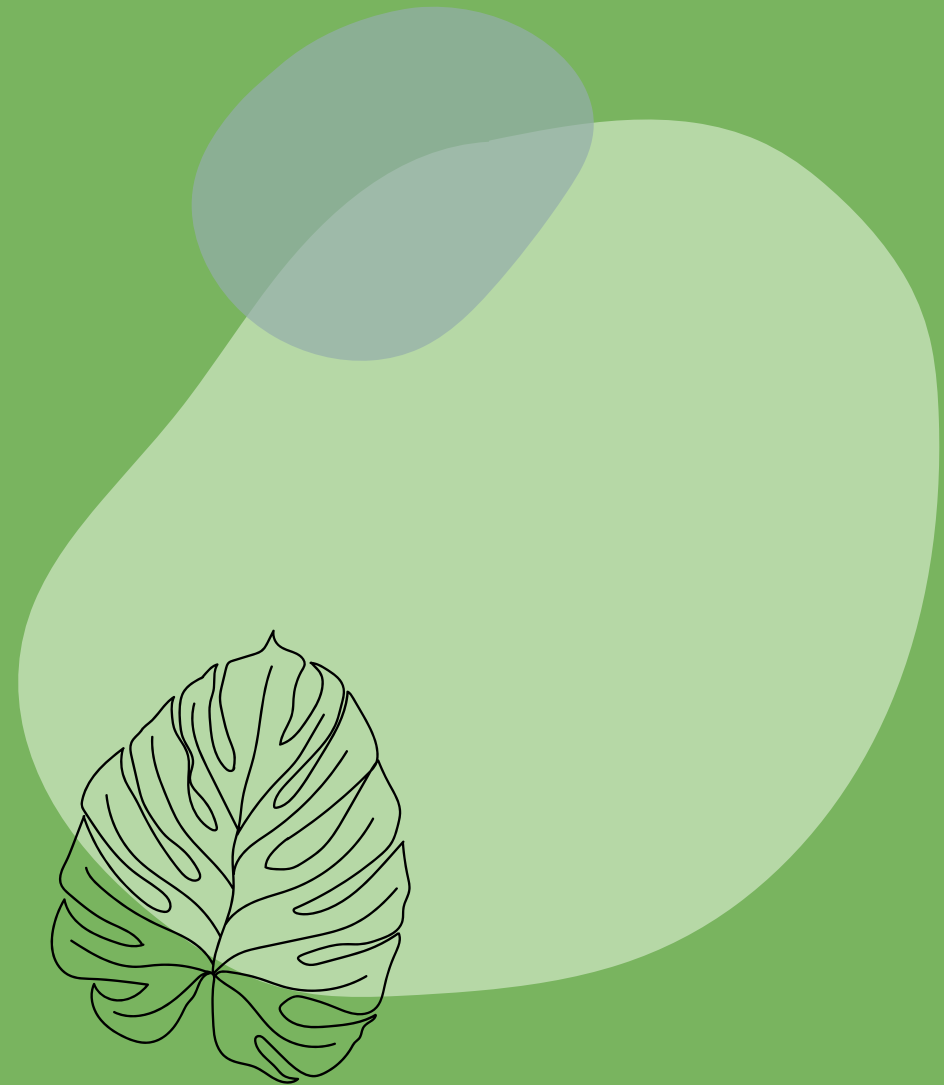
Below is a sample plan showing a song that could be used for 'Day 5' (p.4). Other songs that could be used within a similar GERS framework are listed below:

- The Glory of Creation, Denzil Walton (lyrics: <https://tinyurl.com/43jpebct>; tune: <https://tinyurl.com/22h7rfem> (x2))
- Creator God, Nick and Becky Drake (<https://tinyurl.com/2mabb75v>)
- We are the tenants of the king, Joel Payne (<https://tinyurl.com/b3a4bvuy>)
- Let all creation sing, Paul Zach and Andy Zipf (<https://tinyurl.com/yubs8yvp>)
- Lord, show us how to live, Chris Idle (lyrics: <https://tinyurl.com/mpcucz3v>; tune: <https://tinyurl.com/p286du5h> (x2))
- All things bright and beautiful, Bill Staines (<https://tinyurl.com/3722n3zf>)
- Think of a world without any flowers, Doreen Newport and June Boyce-Tillman (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8vh4rh>)

[2] Detailed in the Heart for the Earth overview (pages 4-5)

[3] Which often put forward the view that we can treat the earth how we please, as there is a heaven quite separate from the earth to which humans will go. For an alternative biblical view in which heaven and the earth come together in an act new creation, see Tom Wright: <https://time.com/5743505/new-testament-heaven/>

- When God made the garden of creation, Paul Booth (<https://tinyurl.com/55zp2up2>)
- Who put the colours in the rainbow, Paul Booth (<https://tinyurl.com/7nm2ksws>)
- All the nations of the earth, Michael Cockett (<https://tinyurl.com/yf6j78cb>)



Gather

Follow the school's normal gathering routines for collective worship

Engage

Choose a section to explore and explain. For instance:

The song we will be looking at today is 'All things bright and beautiful'. It was written by Cecil Frances Alexander who published it in 1848. She wrote it to help explain her view of the meaning of Genesis 1: 31, which states that God is the 'Maker of heaven and earth'.^[4] This is from the same chapter of the bible we have been thinking about in Heart for the Earth.

Let's look at the lyrics of this song. I wonder:

- This is a very popular hymn. Why do you think many Christians like to sing these words? What do you think it makes them think about?
- What does this hymn make you think about?
- How do these words make you feel?

*All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God that made them all*

Each little flower that opens
Each little bird that sings
God made their glowing colours
And made their tiny wings

Respond

Invite the school community to sing or listen to 'All things bright and beautiful'.

It can be found here:

<http://tinyurl.com/44p55zh>

Send

Offer a reflective question to send the school community out with. For example:

I wonder how you might show appreciation for 'all things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small' this week?

^[4] <http://tinyurl.com/ywpjyc7>

The purple headed mountains
The rivers running by
The sunset and the morning
That brightens up the sky

The cold wind in the winter
The pleasant summer sun
The ripe fruits in the garden
God made them every one

God gave us eyes to see them
And lips that we might tell
How great is the Almighty
Who has made all things well