

Singing Worship - Day 4

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.

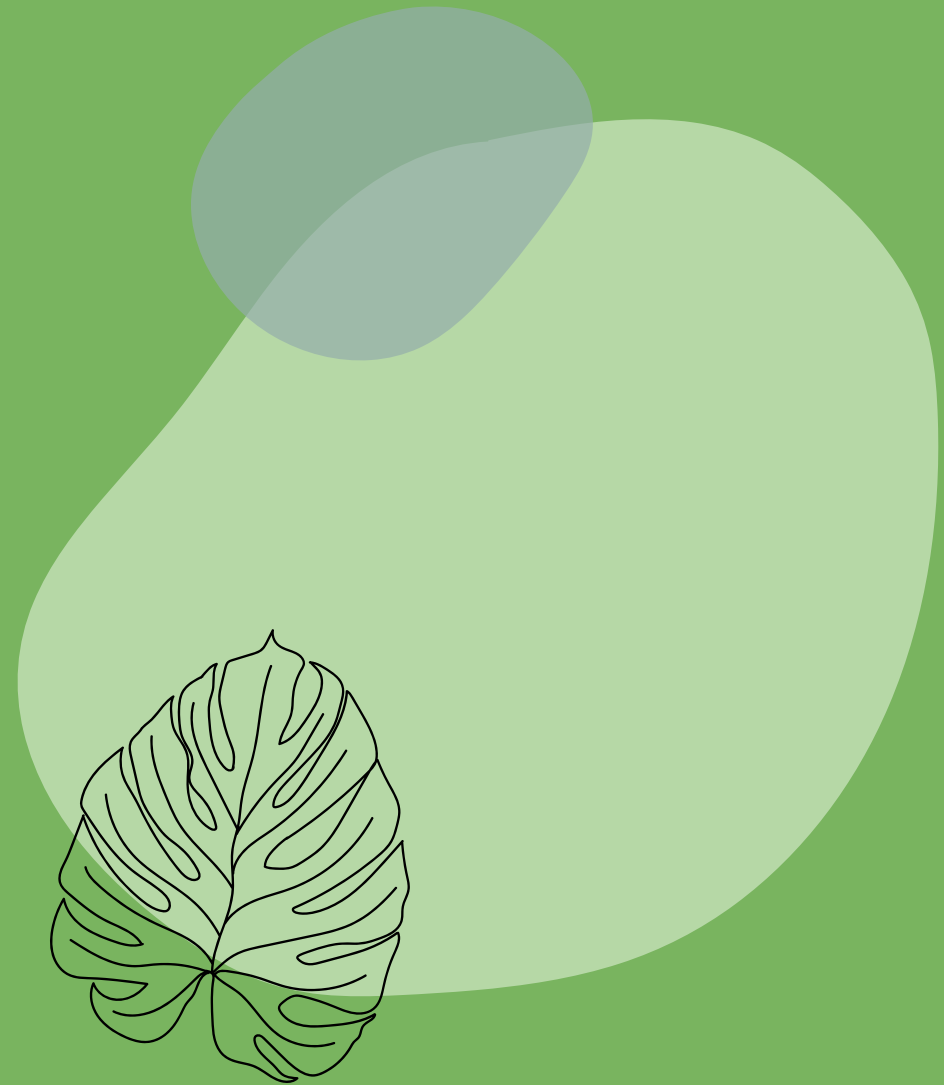
Below is a sample plan showing a song that could be used for 'Day 4' (p.4). Other songs that could be used within a similar GERS framework are listed below:

- 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 introduced today is called 'Let all creation sing'. It was written by two Christians – Paul Zach and Andy Ziph – in 2020. When asked about the song, Paul and Andy said:

'This song was inspired by Psalm 96 where it talks about the fields, trees, and the sea all praising the Lord in their own way. I'm glad that we can join in with ALL of creation (including the narwhals and armadillos).'

Here is a section of Psalm 96 (Psalms are sacred songs or poems in the Old Testament that are often read or sung by Christians)

Be glad, earth and sky!
Roar, sea, and every creature in you;
be glad, fields, and everything in you!
The trees in the woods will shout for joy
when the Lord comes to rule the earth.
He will rule the peoples of the world
with justice and fairness.
(Psalm 96: 11-13 – Good News Translation)

Let's look at the lyrics of the song (<https://tinyurl.com/53nrzcbd>); perhaps through watching the video until 1:02 – the first chorus and stanza. I wonder...what links back to the Psalm can you make?

Let all creation sing before the Lord
and every nation of the earth rejoice,
let all the trees lift a shout of joy
for the Lord is King

Respond

Invite the school community to sing or listen to 'Let all creation sing'.

If you'd like to, why not introduce actions and/or claps during the chorus? Perhaps pupils could suggest some actions?

Send

Some reflective questions to send the school community out with. For example:

How does the song and Psalm link to the 'community of creation' idea we have been exploring in Heart for the Earth?

I wonder how you might show appreciation for the planet this week?

Let the deep waters of the sea resound,
let every mountain, every hill sing out,
let all the fields make a joyful sound
for the Lord is King.

Mighty river, barren desert,
howling wind and stormy weather,
every canyon every valley,
sing your praise and give him glory.

Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.

Every star and constellation,
every wonder in the heavens,
silver moon and supernova,
sing a shining hallelujah!

Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.

Honey bees and weeping willows,
grizzly bears and armadillos,
every narwhal and sea otter,
every son and every daughter.

Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.

La la la la la la la - All the earth, praise the Lord
La la la la la la la - All the earth, praise the Lord