

Gathering

Follow the school's normal gathering routines, using words of liturgy which are familiar to students and adults

or

Light a candle and offer the following prayer: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you'. Response: *and also with you*. (To support pupil understanding of the Christian belief in God as Trinity here, why not light a single candle which has three wicks, lighting them in turn as each 'person' is acknowledged?)

Engagement

Remind the school community that we are taking part in the 'God in this place' initiative. This is an opportunity, with other church schools in the Diocese of St Albans, to:

- celebrate who we are as a Church of England school;
- journey together as we explore the story of Jacob's dream in Genesis 28; and
- pray for our community as a Church of England school and our family of church schools in the Diocese.

It is important to think about 'this place'. In a normal week, what are the different places that you go to? School, home, park, shops, anywhere else?

I wonder what you think of when you hear the word 'community'? *Invite thinking and/or discussion time, and invite some responses.*

We could think about the word community in two ways:

- 1) that we are part of different communities. School community, family community, village community, a sporting community, a community focussed around an interest or hobby etc.
- 2) the meaning of the word 'community'. 'Com-' means 'together', and 'munus' means 'gifts, time, treasure and talents'.

At our church school, we are all part of our school community. And as a church school community, we are *inward* and *outward* facing. In other words, we work so that all thrive, belong, succeed and grow in our school (inward). But we also want to make a positive difference in the world outside our school gates in the communities in which we are a part (outward).

For many Christians, the bible reveals a God who is passionate about everyone flourishing. Jesus demonstrated, through his teaching and example, a heart for those in need, a heart for those who don't feel welcome or even pushed out by some communities. Below are a few bible verses – I wonder what they make you think of? I wonder how they make you feel?

'Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy'.
(Proverbs 31: 8-9)

"You must see that justice is done, and must show kindness and mercy to one another" (Zechariah 7:9)

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God' (Matthew 5:9)

I wonder what you think are some of the biggest issues facing humanity/the world today? Let's watch a video of a few people sharing their perspectives:

Watch **Week 1 Pupil Video** <https://youtu.be/-AwBXqwNzYk>

Give students time to discuss/reflect on the questions asked in the video:

- *What do you think are the biggest issues facing the humanity/world today?*
- *How can we help? What can we change?*
- *What can we pray for?*

If you'd like to, invite student responses and note some down.

Response

Offer a time of prayer, inviting students to make the prayer their own if they would like to by saying 'Amen' at the end.

Let us pray that God can work through us in this time, in this place, to work for a world where all flourish and belong.

Open us up, God:

for all you have for us today.

Open our eyes, God:

to see you reflected in every human face.

Open our hearts, God:

to know your love for us, vast as the ocean.

Open our ears, God:

to hear the whisper of your Spirit and the wisdom of your Word.

Open our hands, God:

this is your ministry, your Kingdom, your power, your glory.

Open our lips, God:

That our mouths may sing out your praise.

Amen

Sending

As you go about your week, in all of the communities in which you are a part, I invite you to reflect upon 'how God might be working in this place?'. How might you join in?