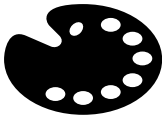


‘In conversation with Elisabeth Sutcliffe’: spiritual development and class-based worship

Top Tips and Take-Aways

Elisabeth’s top tips and wisdom	Questions to reflect on as a school
‘Having an understanding of spirituality gave me direction when thinking about providing opportunities for ‘wow’ moments and thinking about things in a new way. It also helped pupils reflect on the experiences they’ve had and to think about their place in the world and what it means to them’. 	• Is there a shared understanding of spirituality/spiritual development across staff? Governors? Pupils? • If so, what impact does this have on collective worship? • If not, what might be your next-steps in taking this forward? Would having a shared understanding of spiritual development assist the planning/experience of class-based worship? • Which models from the Church of England’s <i>Spiritual Development: Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom</i> might be useful here?
Class-based worship can help pupils to have deep personal reflections and allow for more creative approaches. 	• What do you think are the benefits of class-based worship as opposed to meeting in larger groups? • Which means of expression be possible in a class context which might not be in a larger group? • What might be some difficulties in facilitating class-based worship? What have you experienced? How might we overcome these?
It’s useful to have a clear transition between lessons and collective worship in class. Perhaps it might include: sitting differently, facing towards a new worship focal point, lighting a candle, playing some music, showing an image, saying some words or slightly rearranging something in the classroom. It should be something you do regularly which becomes a pattern and something pupils expect. 	• How might you transition between classwork and worship time? • How could a real sense of ‘space and place’ be created? • Which of these gathering methods might you like to trial? Might pupils be involved in the decision making and leading?

Don't panic! Planning and/or facilitating class-based worship is a journey. 	• What have you learnt from leading class-based worship? What went well? What would you like time to think about more or trial? • Could you share ideas and experiences as a team? What benefits might this have? • Have you asked what pupils think about class-based worship? What do they really like or find powerful? Have they any thoughts on what could be trialled or changed? • To what extent are pupils involved at all stages of class-based worship (e.g. GERS – gathering, engaging, responding, sending)?
'I found the 'I wonder...' questions of Godly Play very freeing...we're not forcing ourselves to come to an answer, we're leaving our reflections as wondering'. 	• Do you think 'I wonder...' might lead to deeper reflections from all in collective worship? • Might 'I wonder' questions help make collective worship even more inclusive, invitational and inspirational?

The following might be useful for those wishing to explore some of these ideas further:

- Church of England Education Office. *Spiritual Development: Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom* (2019): <https://tinyurl.com/wrnfv2>
- Tony Eaude, *New Perspectives on Spiritual Development*: <https://edperspectives.org.uk/new-perspectives-on-spiritual-development-2/>
- David Hay and Rebecca Nye. *The Spirit of the Child* (Jessica Kingsley: London, 2006)
- Elisabeth Sutcliffe - a range of guidance on spiritual development and collective worship, including *Class collective worship: supporting primary pupils' well-being in the pandemic*: http://csoc.org.uk/activities_resources/resources/collective-worship
- Godly Play UK: <https://www.godlyplay.uk/>
- Ronni Lamont. *Understanding Children, Understanding God* (SPCK: London, 2007)
- Rebecca Nye. *Children's Spirituality: what it is and why it matters* (Church House Publishing: London, 2009)
- SPCK: <https://www.assemblies.org.uk/>

If you'd like to discuss aspects of collective worship further, please contact Ryan Parker (RE and Christian Ethos Adviser) – rparker@stalbans.anglican.org.