

# What is Christian Worship?

Year Group: Y1 & Y2

A Suggested “Christianity School Development” Unit  
for Cambridgeshire



## Materials to Support The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Cambridgeshire

### For the Teacher - The Christian beliefs and teaching in this Unit

To “worship” someone or something is to hold them in high respect and honour, and the word is used often in English with this simple meaning and no genuine religious connotations e.g. “he worshipped the ground she walked on”..... With religious worship of any faith, it is different: there is a personalised focus (God) who is beyond and more powerful than the worshipper (transcendent); the worship is about entering into **relationship** with God and this will often include a range of ritual actions which may be carried out individually or in congregation; worship may look to the outsider like a withdrawing from everyday life, but it is in fact a key pivot around which a believer’s whole life and lifestyle revolve.

Christians worship God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is done in many different ways and at different times, and the form and style of worship varies both within denominations and between denominations – the particular style of worship in any one church will reflect in some way national culture, history and local tradition, as well, obviously, as particular beliefs. Normally Sunday is kept as a particularly holy day, because it is a weekly commemoration of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead on Easter Sunday, but worship is not confined to a certain time slot and there are many experiments going on with weekday worship gatherings for those whose complicated twenty-first century lives make meeting together on a Sunday impossible.

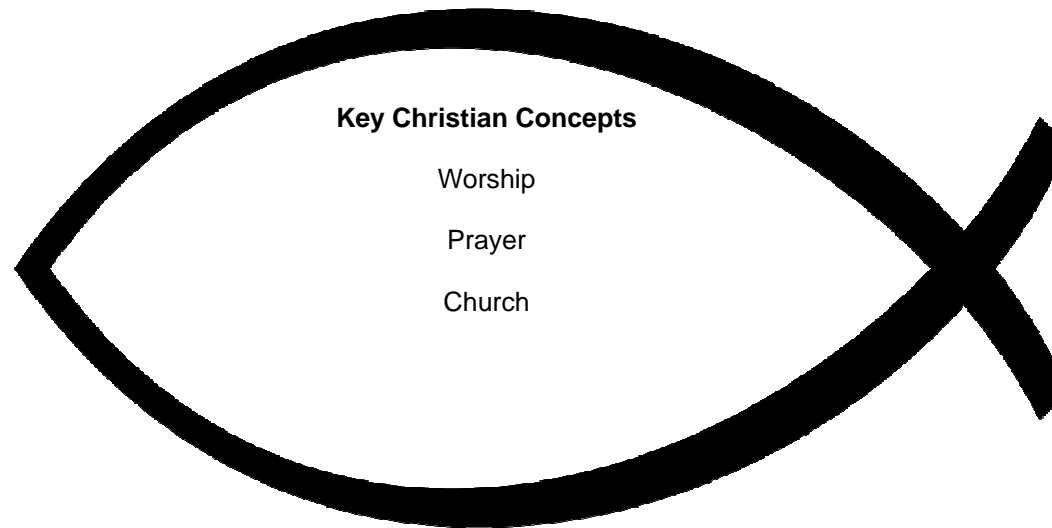
Mark chp 12 vs 30 says: “ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength”, in other words, with your emotions, your reason and your body. You can see all these different elements in Christian worship in the high drama of ritual (and sometimes actual dance and drama too), in hearing and thinking on the Word of God, and the engagement of the emotions particularly in prayer and singing. In some churches there will be a set, perhaps ancient, liturgy which is always followed and the familiarity of the set phrases and actions brings a certain comfort and heightened spiritual focus to those who participate (think of monks saying the daily offices for example). In other churches, such as the Pentecostal Church, the emphasis is upon allowing the Holy Spirit to speak to and through those present and worship styles will be freer.

The central theme of all Christian worship is adoration of God and thanksgiving, and this will be seen in all services, even those which are responses to disaster, for example. You can see this pattern in the Book of Psalms in the Bible (which is essentially the hymn book of the Jerusalem Temple in the Old Testament period) where every psalm honours God, even when the writer is in desperate circumstances. Hymns and songs for current use in worship follow the same pattern and it is often said that the Anglican Church actually does a lot of teaching week by week through the words of familiar hymns!

All Churches use the Bible, and most have a service based on the Last Supper (Eucharist, Mass, Holy Communion, Lords Supper). However, you will find that in most denominations one will predominate over the other i.e. if this is the Eucharist the focus is on the visible sign of God's presence, while if it is the Bible the emphasis will be upon the revelation of God's Word and upon preaching.

Worship is not just about what happens in church, it is a whole life commitment and Christians will worship, pray and read the Bible regularly on their own or in small (family) groups. The current emphasis on "Fresh Expressions" of worship has also led to gatherings in unusual places (such as pubs) and worshipping in different ways (such as Messy Church). Worship of God also carries with it the notion of service to others, as the whole of one's life can be seen as worship in action.

For many pupils collective worship in school will be their only experience of any form of worship, but do not forget that there is a difference between corporate worship (when a body of believers comes together as in a church and chooses to worship God) and collective worship (when a group collected for another reason – schooling – is offered an opportunity to worship God which they may or may not choose to take up). However, a positive experience of collective worship should certainly help a child understand something of what is happening in a believing community and will already have familiarised them with some forms of worship.



## UNIT TITLE: What is Christian Worship?

**Key Question: How do we know when people are worshipping?**

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To identify different ways of worshipping God.</p> <p>To understand that worship is what happens in your heart as well as what you do.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Together make a list of the type of things the school does in collective worship (assembly) and at special festival times. Which of these do we think are “worship”?</li> <li>• AND/ OR Talking about fans and fan clubs can be a useful way in to thinking about how people worship God – what do people say about their hero’s personality (“brilliant!”), how do they show they admire them etc – this actually can work especially well if the church you are visiting or looking at has colourful praise banners which you can then compare to the fan club at work!</li> <li>• Use the interactive webpage at <a href="http://www.request.org.uk/main/dowhat/worship/worship06.htm">http://www.request.org.uk/main/dowhat/worship/worship06.htm</a> to discuss the question “When is singing worship and when is it just singing because we enjoy it?”. Use the second interactive page at <a href="http://www.request.org.uk/infants/tellme/prayer/prayer01.php">http://www.request.org.uk/infants/tellme/prayer/prayer01.php</a> to think about “Is praying the same as talking to my friend?”</li> </ul> <p><b>Agree and record a class statement: “We think worship is when.....”</b></p> <p><i>The four agreed class statements in this enquiry can become the focus of a class working wall.</i></p>	<p>I can name different things people do when they worship. I can talk about what I feel like when I am in assembly (collective worship) Level 1</p> <p>I can retell what happened in an act of collective worship. I recognise that Christians might feel something special in their hearts when they are worshipping God</p> <p>I can describe different things which can make up worship and make links between how I feel and how Christians feel when worshipping. Level 3</p>	<p>Worship is made up of a number of different elements but at its core is relating to God – stories from the Bible, for example, feature in worship, but also appear in RE lessons and possibly storytime – in the latter these are not viewed as worship because of the context.</p> <p>The aim of the interactive webpages is to help pupils discuss the idea of worship as a natural part of a relationship with God and that people worship because of what they believe and think – just going through certain motions may look like worship, but may not be worship if the heart is not in it.</p>

*What do we want from working with this question?*

Pupils to have the start of an idea about what “worship” can entail. Also to understand that undertaking an action grudgingly or without “your heart in it” does not really count as worship.

Key Question: Who do Christians worship?			
Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To identify reasons why Christians worship God</p> <p>To think about the meaning of some Christian hymns</p> <p>To discuss personal experiences of worship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brainstorm – what do we know so far about God and Jesus? Why do we think Christians worship them (e.g thankfulness for creation or salvation – this will probably depend on previous RE and collective worship experiences)</li> <li>Explore Christian worship songs and their meaning using collections such as <a href="http://www.request.org.uk/infants/music/music00.php">http://www.request.org.uk/infants/music/music00.php</a> or your own favourite assembly hymns. What do these songs tell us about why Christians worship God? (e.g. thanking / asking God for....)</li> <li>Prepare and ask some questions for a Christian visitor on why they worship God.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agree a second class statement “We think Christians worship God because...”</b></p> <p><i>Note – at least two sessions, perhaps three including the visitor</i></p>	<p>I can recall stories about God and Jesus and I can talk about my own experience of worship Level 1</p> <p>I can recognise the Christian message in some hymns and I can ask questions about worship and respond sensitively to the answers Level 2</p> <p>I can use my knowledge of Christian beliefs to help me describe the meaning of some hymns. I can ask questions about worship and link the answers to my own ideas Level 3</p>	<p><a href="http://www.request.org.uk/main/basics/god/god02.htm">http://www.request.org.uk/main/basics/god/god02.htm</a> is a helpful start to answer the question of what Christians believe about God, but in its present form is designed for KS2 &amp; KS3.</p> <p>You can also pick up ideas from <a href="http://www.educhurch.org.uk/teachers/beliefs.html">http://www.educhurch.org.uk/teachers/beliefs.html</a> Worship is at <a href="http://www.educhurch.org.uk/teachers/worship.html">http://www.educhurch.org.uk/teachers/worship.html</a> As it originates from a Suffolk school the photographs all look like our area, which helps!</p> <p><i>If you are using the school's favourite hymns for this activity do choose your examples wisely – if the children just choose ones they like you may not be able to learn much from them!</i></p>

*What do we want from working with this question?*

Pupils to be able to recognise that Christians worship God because they are in a form of relationship with Him.

Key Question: How many different ways can you worship God?			
Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To think about and discuss the ways in which people worship locally and around the world</p> <p>To identify how a church building is used for worship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use videos and images (e.g. from Google) to see Christian worship taking place around the world. The Educhurch website is particularly good for local examples of worship and has a selection of videos for three different churches (Anglican, Salvation Army, Christian Fellowship) at <a href="http://www.educhurch.org.uk/pupils/notice/video.html">http://www.educhurch.org.uk/pupils/notice/video.html</a></li> <li>Together list as many different styles/types of worship as possible. Compare this list to your original collective worship record – are there things on the new list you had not thought of before?</li> <li>Visit a local church with your list of worship ideas and a church plan. Draw items you discover which are used in worship and then label where you can find them on the plan (candles, hymn books, Bible, pulpit etc). Ask whoever is showing you around the church to look at the list of worship ideas and confirm/ explain which do and which do not happen in that particular church.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agree a third class statement: “We have discovered that when people are worshipping God they can do it in many different ways including:.....”</b></p> <p><i>Note – this is at least two lessons</i></p>	<p>I can talk about pictures of Christian worship taking place in different places around the world. I can talk about what I find puzzling about the different kinds of Christian worship Level 1</p> <p>I can identify how Christian worship may be practised differently around the world and begin to suggest reasons for this. I can respond sensitively when I see people worshipping in ways which are unfamiliar to me Level 2</p> <p>I can explain similarities and differences in Christian worship around the world and compare these to what happens in our local church Level 3</p>	<p><a href="http://www.request.org.uk/main/churches/churches.htm">http://www.request.org.uk/main/churches/churches.htm</a> has “I go to...” pages on all the major denominations in England which will highlight a variety of approaches to Christian worship.</p> <p>There are many videos of different aspects of worship around the world e.g: <a href="http://www.request.org.uk/main/dowhat/worship/worship09.htm">http://www.request.org.uk/main/dowhat/worship/worship09.htm</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDpeeOOOcTw">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDpeeOOOcTw</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HLVC1PFpnQ">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HLVC1PFpnQ</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHsenK-vrns">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHsenK-vrns</a>  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEw1Ss5PUTc">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEw1Ss5PUTc</a></p>

*What do we want from working with this question?*

Pupils to realise that people can worship God in more than one way and that not all churches do things the same way as their local church.

**Key Question: Where do you have to go if you want to worship God? (Do you have to go to church to worship God?)**

Learning Objectives	Suggested Teaching and Learning	Learning Outcomes (Can be written as success criteria)	Points to note
<p>To recognise that Christians can worship God wherever they like</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christian families often worship together at home – explore this at <a href="http://www.request.org.uk/infants/faithhome/home08.php">http://www.request.org.uk/infants/faithhome/home08.php</a></li> <li>• Use a rich variety of visual and audio stimuli to suggest different places in the world and discuss “What might Christians pray to God about if they were here?” (e.g: a storm at sea; a wonderful natural view; a busy marketplace; at work). Do you think it would be easier to worship God in a church, or in one of these other places? Why? (Distractions? Easier to pray alone or in community?) Is there anywhere in the world you think people could <i>not</i> worship God if they wanted to?</li> <li>• <b>Assessment – design a banner showing the best place to worship God (in your opinion) and include a suitable worship statement (be able to explain your choices).</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Complete your set of agreed class statements: “We have discovered that when people want to worship God they can go....”</b></p>	<p>I can suggest different places where Christians could pray and talk about a place which would be special to me Level 1</p> <p>I can explain why Christians might like to pray in different places, including church. I can recognise why people can pray in places other than a church Level 2</p> <p>I can describe how Christian’s belief in God means that they can pray wherever they wish, and make links between how people feel and the places they may choose to pray. Level 3</p>	<p>The answer to this key question is “anywhere they like!” so pupils’ individual responses about where they might go or who they would like to be with are as valid as anything else which arises from the enquiry. The core of the answer is “God is everywhere”.</p> <p><i>Note the link between this unit and the Agreed Syllabus core unit on the Family in Christianity which could be recalled instead of using the online resource.</i></p>

*What do we want from working with this question?*

Pupils to realise that worshipping God is not an activity limited by set forms, time or place.