

Act of Collective Worship to Welcome a New Vicar to the School

Introduction

- This collective worship is written to be used soon after the new vicar has been licensed to the parish, to signify a commitment to building a strong relationship between church and school.
- It requires inviting, and pulling together contributions from a few different people, so we suggest that one individual is responsible for putting this worship together and that they invite people from outside the school as far in advance as possible.
- We suggest that this is held in the school rather than the church, because it is designed to welcome the new vicar to the school community.
- We suggest that as many of the school community as you can fit into the space are invited to be present. For example, you may wish to invite governors, kitchen staff, office staff and premises staff. If there is room, parents might be invited, or if space is limited the class reps or PTA committee.
- A representative from the Diocese of Guildford would be delighted to attend this important collective worship. In the first instance, please contact the [Diocesan Director of Education](#) and they will liaise with the team to see who the most suitable person is to join you.
- This liturgy is an outline for schools to adapt to suit their context. For example, the school may have an opening response that they always use in collective worship, we recommend that you use this.
- Talk to the new vicar about how they wish to be known. In the liturgy below we have used [Rev XYZ](#) but they may prefer a more informal name.
- It would be good to include a song of welcome. The school may have a favourite, or you may wish to teach the children one of the suggested songs below.
- The engaging (talk) part of the worship could be led by the headteacher, pupils, new vicar, another member of the school or church staff or the diocesan representative. It is important that the school asks the person in good time for them to prepare the content.

Suggestions for the Engage or Talk Element:

- If the church and school are named after a saint, it may be appropriate to make a link to that saint in the collective worship. (There is an example that uses St Mary in an appendix to this material.)
- This could be an opportunity to use the school vision statement and Biblical link as the theme for the engage part of the collective worship.

Suggested Songs

[Every Step by Nick & Becky Drake](#)

[Hello from All About Our School BBC](#)

[It's Not Just a Pile of Old Bricks BBC](#)

[Life is Always Better PopUK](#) (create a log in to access the free songs)

[Together by Nick & Becky Drake](#)

Or a suitable song from your school repertoire

Resources needed:

- Candle to light at the start of collective worship (and matches or a lighter)

- A Bible to give to the new vicar. This should be the version that the school uses in collective worship.
PowerPoint file with slides of words and relevant images
- Facility to play a song.
- Microphone for use by children

Aims:

- To welcome the new vicar and commission them for their new role in the school.
- To make the link with *Rev XYZ*' new job at *XYZ Church* and their link with the school.
- To reflect on what job pupils and adults might be called to do in their class, school or family this week.

Gathering

The headteacher lights the candle.

If the school or church have their own opening response use that instead of the suggestion below.

Headteacher: Welcome in the name of Christ. God's grace, mercy and peace be with you

All: And also with you.

Headteacher: Good morning, everyone. We are gathered here today for a very special act of collective worship, to welcome the *Rev XYZ*, the new Vicar of *XYZ Church*, into our school community.

Child: *Rev XYZ*, we greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, who are you and why have you come to our school?

New Vicar: I am *Rev XYZ*, a follower of Jesus Christ and the new vicar of *XYZ Church*, and I come in response to the call of God to serve the whole community of *Name of your town or village*.

Child: Why have you been sent to us?

Nicholas: As Vicar of *XYZ Church*, I have been sent to this Church of England school:

- to support the development of a Christian vision which enables pupils and adults to flourish.
- to lead acts of collective worship and contribute to RE lessons,
- to offer pastoral support to the headteacher and staff, the pupils, the parents and carers and the governors,
- to play my part in the governance of the school, making sure that the school's Christian character is preserved and developed,
- to encourage the development of strong links between *XYZ Church*, the Diocese of Guildford and the school; and
- to offer everyone an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice so that we all flourish spiritually.

Child: How do you come among us and with what confidence?

New Vicar: I come knowing nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified and in weakness, trusting in his call to serve him in *insert the name of your town or village*, and knowing that he is with me and will strengthen me by his Holy Spirit.

All: *Name of new vicar*, we welcome you. *There then follows a round of applause.*

Engaging – this could be led by the Headteacher, pupils, another member of the school or church staff or the diocesan representative.

Today is **Rev XYZ** first day in his /her new job as vicar at **XYZ Church** and vicar for your school. He said yes when he was asked to do that job. Our special collective worship today is to welcome him/ her to **XYZ School** as he starts his new job.

Responding

Reflection and Prayer this could be led by the Headteacher, pupils, another member of the school or church staff or the diocesan representative

- You could use some wondering questions that refer to characters or events in the story you have just explored.
- Then a wondering question that consider how this might apply to the pupils' own lives.
- You could invite pupils and adults to listen to a short prayer that links to the story you have explored. Make it clear that is they wish they can join in with Amen at the end of the prayer.

Act of Commissioning

Headteacher: We join together to welcome the **Rev XYZ** to our school and to acknowledge their Christian ministry as our Vicar.

Headteacher: **Rev XYZ** as Vicar of **XYZ**, will you work with school leaders and governors to support the development of a Christian vision which enables pupils and adults to flourish?

New Vicar: With the help of God, I will.

Child: **Rev XYZ**, will you plan and lead acts of collective worship that enable pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?

New Vicar: With the help of God, I will.

RE Subject Leader: **Rev XYZ**, will you support the teaching of effective and high-quality Religious Education?

New Vicar: With the help of God, I will.

Parent: **Rev XYZ**, will you be a listening and encouraging presence to the headteacher and staff, the pupils, the parents and carers and the governors.

Governor: **Rev XYZ**, will you faithfully and diligently perform your duties as a governor, making sure that the school's Christian character is preserved and developed?

New Vicar: With the help of God, I will.

Diocesan Representative: **Rev XYZ**, will you encourage the development of strong links between **XYZ Church**, the Diocese of Guildford and the school; ensuring that the school fulfils its foundation as a Church school?

New Vicar: With the help of God, I will.

Parish Church Representative (E.g. a churchwarden or children's worker etc): *Rev XYZ*, will you offer everyone within the school community an encounter with Jesus Christ and with Christian faith and practice so that all will flourish spiritually?

New Vicar: With the help of God, I will.

Headteacher to children: Children, will you promise to do your best to help and support *Rev XYZ* as the Vicar of our school?

Children: We will.

Diocesan representative to adults: Adults, will you promise to do your best to work with and support *Rev XYZ* as the Vicar of your school?

Adults: We will, with the help of God.

Headteacher to Vicar: To be the Vicar of a church school is a solemn trust. We pray that God will strengthen you by his grace to faithfully fulfil this task.

Child to Vicar: Receive this Bible to mark your new role. It is God's Word and the foundation of all true wisdom. Use it to guide and inspire you in your work in our school.

Diocesan representative: Heavenly Father, give to *XYZ* your special gifts of love, joy, wisdom, grace and understanding that he / she may serve this school community with gladness to the honour of your Holy Name. **Amen.**

Headteacher introduces the song.

Song see suggestions above

Sending – led by the Vicar

I have started a new job, in a new church and a new school community. Today you have made me welcome.

How could you make people feel welcome in your class, your school or you community this week?

The Blessing

As we end this time of worship today may God fill us with love for each other so that we can do the job he has ready for us to do in our school community; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

The Dismissal

If the school or church have their own sending response use that instead of the suggestion below.

Vicar: Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Vicar blows out the candle.

With grateful thanks to Rev Nicholas Pye Vicar of St Mary's Chessington for sharing this material with us. 2025

Resources needed:

- Post it note saying 'empty dishwasher'
- Phone with text message 'buy milk on the way home'
- Letter offering a job as an aeroplane pilot.
- Blue fabric, white fabric, tinsel halo

Engaging

I wonder if you have ever been asked to do a job?

I wonder how you were asked to do that job.

Let's have a look at how you might be asked to do a job.

Invite volunteer to read the post it.

Please empty the dishwasher. Would you say yes to that job?

Invite volunteer to read the text on your phone.

Buy milk on the way home. Shall I say yes to that job?

Invite volunteer to read the aeroplane pilot job offer letter. Would you say yes to that job?

Let's read about someone in the Bible who was asked to do an important job.

You will probably know about her because her name is on your sweatshirts and is the name of your school and your church.

2 volunteers.

Mary – give blue fabric for cloak

Angel Gabriel - give white fabric for cloak and tinsel for halo.

Read this edited account from Luke 1.

Ask the characters to repeat their highlighted phrases after you. Gabriel Mary

God sent the angel Gabriel to a young lady who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee.

She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David.

Her name was Mary. The angel came to her and said,

"Greetings! The Lord has blessed you and is with you."

But Mary was very confused by what the angel said. Mary wondered, **"What does this mean?"**

The angel said to her, **"Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is pleased with you.**

You will have a baby and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, the Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. His kingdom will never end."

Mary said to the angel, **"How will this happen? I am not married!"**

The angel said to Mary, **"The Holy Spirit will come upon you. The baby will be holy.**

He will be called the Son of God.

Mary said, **"I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!"**

Then the angel went away.

Mary was asked to do a special job to be the mother of Jesus. She said yes when she was asked to do this job. Your school and your church are St Mary's Church to remind us of Mary who was Jesus' mother.

Today is Vicar **XYZ's** first day in his / her new job as vicar at St Mary's Church and vicar for your school. He / she said yes when he was asked to do that job. Our special collective worship today is to welcome him to St Mary's as he starts his new job.

Responding

Reflection and Prayer

- I wonder, if you had been Mary in the story, would you have said 'yes'?
- I wonder what jobs have you been asked to do?
- I wonder if you did the job?
- I wonder if you did the job willingly, or if you needed reminding?

Following some silence, indicate that children and adults are invited to listen to this prayer and, if they wish to and they agree with it, to say 'Amen' at the end of it:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the life and example of your servant, Mary, the mother of Jesus — and for the outpouring of your Holy Spirit on her. Like Mary, help us, to be willing to serve you and others with a generous and loving spirit. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**