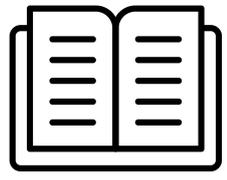


SCHOOL



OVERVIEW



1 Corinthians 12:25-27 (ESV)

That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul writes to the community at Corinth to remind them about the individual and collective nature of community. The word community derives from two Latin words: com-, 'together', plus -munus, 'gift'. Literally, community is not just a living together but a giving together. Because of our individuality, we all have something unique to bring and contribute to the school community; because of our individual and collective giving, we also have much to receive.

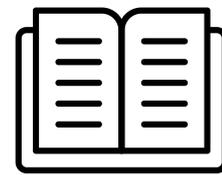
This sense of community has been apparent throughout the C-19 pandemic. In many ways, it has brought us closer together as we have shown love, care and compassion through social distancing, our adaptations to teaching and learning, showing appreciation for those supporting us and more besides. It has also been a time of great difficulty – many are grieving the loss of loved ones and opportunities. Paul's words to the Christian community in Corinth speak pertinently to today, with the vision that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together.

This understanding of community underpins the ideas for spiritual reflection offered within this resource. On Page 2, you will find practical suggestions to create a reflective area in the school grounds which serves as a focal point for remembrance and spiritual reflection following the C-19 pandemic. Pages 3 and 4 outline a 'plug-in-and-play' framework for examen which can be printed and laminated to help structure spiritual reflection at this space. Page 5 offers an act of collective worship which introduces examen as a tool for spiritual reflection to the school community.

We hope that you find these resources useful within your school communities. Schools are encouraged to adapt and amend these ideas for use in your own context. We would also love to receive your feedback as to how your school community has used these resources.



REFLECTION AREA



This page offers practical suggestions to create a reflective area in the school grounds which serves as a focal point for remembrance and spiritual reflection following the C-19 pandemic. This area is a place where all members of the school community are invited to offer their reflections and use as a space of spiritual contemplation. It is a focal point to remember that we are a part of a community: we are all connected; we each come with something to bring/lay down; we come with an openness to receive; we are here to remember and reflect individually and in community. This act of both giving and receiving is at the heart of the school's community. Below are some ideas and reflective questions to help you think about the creation and use of a reflective space in your setting.



Ponder what your space for remembrance and reflection might look like. Some ideas are below. Could pupils be involved in the decision making here?

- 'Yarn-bomb' an area. What colours/images could be used? What might they represent? Who might contribute to this – pupils, staff, governors, families, the local church community?
- Create an artwork in which each member of the school community places their thumb-print to create an image meaningful to the school, its vision and/or remembrance.
- Construct a meaningful sculpture through collecting single-use plastics and covering in mesh. Invite the school community to symbolically place an object on or near this to aid reflection (e.g. a painted pebble), perhaps as part of collective worship.
- How might pupils be involved in the planning, creating and maintenance of this area?
- Could funding be accessed through the Community Life Fund to support this? (<https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools/community-life-fund/>)



Could parents/carers be involved in the creation of this space? You might like to:

- send communication home with pupils with information about the reflective space to be created in school
- this could include 'conversation starters' to prompt discussion at home with regards to what the space might look like or to consider what their contribution to the space might be
- invite contributions from home to add to the reflective space



How might this space be revealed?

- Through an act of collective worship?
- A dedication service from which members of the church community could attend?





EXAMEN FOR SPIRITUAL REFLECTION



The next page offers a 'plug-in-and-play' structure to support pupils in using examen as a spiritual tool for reflection. This page can be printed, laminated and placed by the/a reflective area as a reminder of each steps. Reflective questions are used as prompts for each stage. Allowing for such a space is a gift to the school community; it is a place where pupils can reorient and reconnect with themselves, others, the world and God.

You may also wish to create a reflective aide-mémoire as part of class-based collective worship to support pupils in undertaking examen at school, home and other outside spaces such as a churchyard. Hand-held labyrinths have traditionally been used to facilitate such reflection, with different turns providing a reminder to reflect on a particular question. You may have other creative ideas here.





PLUG-IN-AND-PLAY



Find a place to be still and silent: Ready yourself for reflection.

You might like to ask God to help you review your day so far.



Pause and be still: Think about the present.

Take some slow breaths.

What do you notice around you? What can you hear? What can you feel?



Rewind: Review your day so far.



What has made you happy so far today?

Did you, or someone else, say or do anything that made you feel good?

Spend a bit of time being thankful for these things; if you'd like to, thank God for these good things now.



Did anything make you sad so far today?

Perhaps something you, or someone else, did?

Whatever made you unhappy today, remember that you are precious to God and nothing ever changes that. Is there anything you would like to leave with God and say sorry for?



Fast forward: Imagine the future.

Think about the rest of the day. Is there anything you need (e.g. courage, wisdom, patience) to live well?

Is there anything you would like God to help you with?

If you'd like to, talk to God about it now and ask God to be with you through your day.



Play: Resolve to live well for the rest of the day.

What has been the main thing you have taken away from your reflection? How has it helped you as you continue your day?



COLLECTIVE WORSHIP PLAN



GATHER

Follow the school's or class' normal gathering routine.

ENGAGE



The image you can see on the screen is of a Christian saint called Ignatius of Loyola. He was a Spanish soldier in the 16th century, who was heavily wounded in battle. As he recovered, he believed that he had an experience of God which changed his life. He believed that God was calling him to a better future.

He believed, from then on, that God is always present, someone he and other Christians could speak to as a friend. To help him remember this – and to help him think about how he could live the best and most loving life he could – he created a type of prayer called the examen. Examen is a type of prayer which helped Ignatius to think about the past day: what went well that he could thank God for? What didn't go so well that he could say sorry for? And what did he need from God in order to live well the rest of the day? Ignatius did this prayerful reflecting twice a day.

Today – over 450 years later – many people around the world still use examen to help them reflect. It's a little bit like watching your day back in your mind like a TV show: what were the best bits that you are really pleased happened? What were the parts that weren't so great and you can learn from? And what would you like the rest of the day to be like? Many Christians ask God to help them think about the day that they've had; they also ask God to help them during the rest of the day or week. Many who aren't Christian also find this type of reflection useful; it gives them an opportunity to pause, think and then continue in a way which helps them to live well.

We are now going to do an examen together. It follows five steps (explain briefly on PowerPoint slide), using five icons you might see on a remote control. I wonder if you find it helpful in thinking about your day and/or week?

You might like to use the PowerPoint to overview each step first.

RESPONSE

Note: you may want to select a review of day or week depending on when collective worship takes place in the school day. Examen works best when plenty of thinking time is given after each section.



Let's us begin our examen by being still and preparing ourselves for reflection.

If you'd like to, you might like to ask God – in your head – to help you review your day/week so far.



We are now going to pause to think about the present.

Take some slow breaths. What can you hear? What can you feel?



We are now going to rewind and think about our day/week so far.



- What has made you happy so far today?
- Did you, or someone else, say or do anything that made you feel good?
- Spend a bit of time being thankful for these things; if you'd like to, thank God for these good things now.



- Did anything make you sad so far today?
 - Perhaps something you, or someone else, did?
 - Whatever made you unhappy today, remember that you are precious and nothing ever changes that.
 - Is there anything you would you like to leave with God and say sorry for?
-



We are now going to fast-forward and think about the future:

- Think about the rest of the day/week. Is there anything you need to live well? Perhaps courage? Wisdom? Patience? Love? Something else?
- Is there anything you would like to ask God to help you with?

If you'd like to, ask God to be with you through the rest of your day/week.



We are now going to finish our examen. Before we carry on with our day:

- I wonder what your examen made you think about?
- How did it make you feel?
- I wonder how it helped you as you continue your day?

SEND

Explain that examen can be used at any time and any place. We all have our own ways of reflecting and worshipping; it might be that examen is something you find useful.

If the school is going to/has created a focal place for pupils to reflect spiritually using examen, you might want to tell pupils about this space and the steps for examen that can be found there.

Finish with school's/class' normal sending routine.