

Singing Worship - Day 1

Song is a tremendous way in which many access and express their spirituality. It provides a rich opportunity to connect and reflect both individually and as a school community, as voices are lifted and words sung. With this in mind, we are pleased to include within the 'Heart for the Earth' resources a plan per instalment which focuses on sung worship.

The singing worship plan found below follows that of the commonly used 'Gather, Engage, Respond, Send' (GERS) framework for collective worship. This helps:

- ensure that this time together is explicitly an act of collective worship, and
- that an opportunity is provided for some of the words within the song – and related themes – to be explored

This latter aspect is key in the light of the guidance and three main principles of collective worship in Church of England schools^[1]. As the guidance document (2021, pp. 2-3) notes:

Music...used in worship should reflect the best of traditional and modern Anglican worship, it should connect with the theme and explore the sacred to educate and engage. Music used should reflect the diverse worship experience of the wider Christian community.

Care should be taken with the music and liturgy: the traditional and modern riches of Christian hymnody and music will be drawn upon, but schools should think about what is most appropriate, at a given time, for the spiritual life of their particular community.

[1] Church of England Education Office. Collective Worship in Church of England Schools Guidance Document Inclusive, Invitational, Inspiring: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/Collective%20Worship%20Guidance%2018052021.pdf>

Within the 'engage' section, some of the words and themes of the song are explored. Each of the songs suggested within the 'Heart for the Earth' worship plans link to the theology of a 'community of creation' and head, heart, hands framework which underpin each of the published resources[2]; this is in contrast to those songs which espouse a 'dominion' view[3]. Through exploring a small selection of verses of the song, it allows the school community to further understand the Christian themes expressed within them. Individuals can then make their own choice as to whether they choose to sing all of the song, parts of the song or whether they would prefer to listen and reflect. This option and agency maintains both the distinctively Christian and deeply invitational nature of collective worship.

Below is a sample plan showing a song that could be used for 'Day 1' (p.4). Other songs that could be used within a similar GERS framework are listed below:

- The Glory of Creation, Denzil Walton (lyrics: <https://tinyurl.com/43jpebct>; tune: <https://tinyurl.com/22h7rfem> (x2))
- Creator God, Nick and Becky Drake (<https://tinyurl.com/2mabb75v>)
- We are the tenants of the king, Joel Payne (<https://tinyurl.com/b3a4bvuy>)
- Let all creation sing, Paul Zach and Andy Zipf (<https://tinyurl.com/yubs8yvp>)
- Lord, show us how to live, Chris Idle (lyrics: <https://tinyurl.com/mpcucz3v>; tune: <https://tinyurl.com/p286du5h> (x2))
- All things bright and beautiful, Bill Staines (<https://tinyurl.com/3722n3zf>)
- Think of a world without any flowers, Doreen Newport and June Boyce-Tillman (<https://tinyurl.com/2p8vh4rh>)

[2] Detailed in the Heart for the Earth overview (pages 4-5)

[3] Which often put forward the view that we can treat the earth how we please, as there is a heaven quite separate from the earth to which humans will go. For an alternative biblical view in which heaven and the earth come together in an act new creation, see Tom Wright: <https://time.com/5743505/new-testament-heaven/>

- When God made the garden of creation, Paul Booth (<https://tinyurl.com/55zp2up2>)
- Who put the colours in the rainbow, Paul Booth (<https://tinyurl.com/7nm2ksws>)
- All the nations of the earth, Michael Cockett (<https://tinyurl.com/yf6j78cb>)



Gather

Follow the school's normal gathering routines for collective worship

Engage

Choose a section to explore and explain. For instance:

Share the lyrics of the first verse with the school community. You may even choose to listen to this first (<https://tinyurl.com/ms6ct9sx>):

God, the maker of the heavens,
and the planet that we share,
show us how to live, like Jesus,
lives of gratitude and care.

Make us mindful of the footprints
from the lives that we pursue.

Make us partners in your mission:
you are making all things new.

Ask questions such as:

- I wonder why Christians might sing this verse?
- I wonder why Sam wanted to write this song?
- Which is your favourite line? Why?
- I wonder if these words have come from the bible?

There are a number of bible verses Sam was thinking about when he wrote this song. One of them was Psalm 146:6:

He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
he remains faithful forever.

These words remind Christians that God is the creator of the world, and that God cherishes each and every part of it. Sam writes: 'This is a song about our relationship with God's creation. I wanted to focus on the hope that God is "making all things new" - renewing and restoring everything he has made, and to ask God to help us play our part in that amazing vision'. I wonder if this sense of relationship to the natural world is something which is important to you too?

Respond

Invite the school community to sing or listen to 'God the maker of the heavens'

Send

Some reflective questions to send the school community out with (choose one or two):

How might you look after the planet we share today?

How could we show gratitude and care for the planet today?

How could we 'use our hands to heal creation' today?