



1. Welcome!

Age range: Primary

Theme: *We gather as a community for collective worship that is **inspiring, invitational and inclusive**, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. We begin this academic year with a reminder that it's good to be grateful. Research reveals the importance of gratitude even in the midst of adversity: that being aware of each day's 'blessings' can counteract anxiety, and so this term, we want to encourage schools to continue to do this through their collective worship. We provide a script with reflective ideas for classroom use and PowerPoint; both have additional content that you may wish to spread across the week and use in classrooms to ensure that you are meeting the requirement for daily collective worship and to support the spiritual flourishing of your whole school community.*

*You may need to tailor this script to suit the needs, age range & levels of concerns of your school community, which of course includes adults as well as children. **This collective worship is a welcome back to your whole school community and helps them to remember that being welcoming was an idea that Jesus often demonstrated and spoke about. It also offers opportunities to consider how your community can be welcoming at the start of this new year, especially bearing in mind any new pupils you may have in your school.***



How does this link to your school's Christian vision & values?

Use this section to reference your school's values with the idea of **welcoming**. There is a specific opportunity suggested within the script (slide 18).

How might this link with the Guildford Diocese spirituality offer?



This icons in this section show how the collective worship theme links with the elements of **self, others, beauty** and/or **beyond**

 **How we experience welcome**

 **Ways in which we can show welcome to others, including welcome in different cultures**

 **Welcome as something that is important to God**

Resources:

- The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the parts in bold show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation. To help any children with visual timetabling, we include an icon for each different part of this collective worship in the top right corner of each slide.
- The '**Welcome...Around the World**' quiz contains a mixture of flags, greetings in the language of the country & photos of traditional greetings between people. Due the lack of availability of copyright-free images for some, we have created AI images using MS-Copilot, reflecting the different traditions as respectfully as possible!
- The words of the Matthew 25 reflective reading are included on p.3, with suggested props: there has been very little adaption of the text for use in this 'story'. It's always better to tell the story live, but if you need an alternative, there is a video of it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7CaLypwQgo&feature=youtu.be> There are some 'wondering' questions included as part of the video and the script
- There is a prayer included for this collective worship, written by Annie Barnsdale [slightly adapted for this context of welcome]
- You will also need paper for making into 'hands': this could be used during the assembly, and as a separate reflective activity.

Gathering:

Slide 1: Welcome stilling exercise

Use the stilling slide if desired: the suggested words should be spoken slowly, leaving pauses inbetween to create a sense of stillness.

As you sit quietly, watch the word form....see if you can read what it says.....[PAUSE]

Now practise slower breathing.....in.....and out.....in.....and out.....keep this going as you continue to watch....[PAUSE]

You maybe notice that you are feeling calmer and more relaxed....[PAUSE]

As you breathe, think about yourself and what you bring into this time today..... [PAUSE]

We come into this special / sacred space and time to be still....to think deeply.....to be together as a school community.....

In our time together today, we will **have a quiz.....share some words together, and then think together about what they might mean for our school community.**

But first, let's welcome one another as we begin....

- Slide 2:** Use a familiar gathering greeting to **welcome** your school community. We will learn a new greeting next week.



Engaging:

- **Slide 3:** Talk about why we welcome each other to collective worship in this way, with a greeting. 'We're going to find out how different communities around the world welcome each other. See if you can guess the country from the flag, we'll hear some words of welcome that people in that country might use, and then we'll find out what *else* they might do!'
- **Slides 4&5:** Let's start with one you know....though at the moment, we're not able to greet each other like this! [Mention ways that people have adapted for this time e.g. elbow-bumping]
- **Slides 6&7:** New Zealand. Maori tribespeople in New Zealand rub noses as a sign of welcome. There is also a rather more fierce traditional dance, called **the haka**, which is often used as a means of welcome.
- **Slides 8&9:** Tibet. Some Tibetan tribespeople stick out their tongue at the other person as a greeting!
- **Slides 10&11:** Japan. This is an informal bow used for all ranks and occasions.
- **Slides 12&13:** France. 3 kisses, going from cheek to cheek, then back to the first cheek.
- **Slides 14&15:** Kenya. Masai tribespeople traditionally welcome visitors to their village with a jumping dance. You can view one here!: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6wlp4wZU9w> or a female version here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVTP3vU9MLE>
- **Slide 16:** And some of you might just remember back to the COVID-19 pandemic, when we were all social distancing, and this is how we had to greet each other!!
- **Slide 17:** We're going to hear some words about welcome now, spoken by Jesus. People often asked him questions about how to live, or what it should be like in God's Kingdom. As you watch and listen, think about what he said, and how his words might help us to think about ways to be welcoming in our own school community..... *[use script on page 3 – or click on the screen and it will link to the video]*



Responding (and words for worship):

- **Slide 18:** After the 'story', talk about children's ideas about welcome, linking them with your school's vision and values & using the wondering questions from the script:



I wonder.....

...what you think about these ideas?....

I wonder why these things might be so important to God?

Or why Jesus chose these actions as the answer to peoples' questions?

I wonder.....how might we do some of these things at this time?

Slide 19: ...We've been thinking today about the different ways in which communities show welcome....
....we've been reminded of Jesus' words about welcoming others in the way that we treat them....

.....

...we've also talked about how we might do this here, in School.....

....I wonder how many other ways we might think of to be welcoming to others?....

....let's spend a few quiet moments now, thinking about our own responses....

....and how we might put them into practice....

NB You might want to use the 'paper hand' reflective idea (see box below) at this point, as part of the response time.
....now I'm going to offer some of our ideas to God in prayer and ask him to help us.... find a way to make the prayer yours if you'd like to join me.... There are some *actions* to join in with if it helps you....

Slide 20: God, who welcomes all,

At the beginning of this new term, teach us to be your hands and feet where we are, *[show hands, point to feet]*

At the beginning of this new term, teach us to love as you love us *[hands on heart]*

At the beginning of this new term, teach us to **welcome** those in need. *[extend hands in welcome]*

So that You are **welcomed in this place**.



Slide 21: Amen

Songs to sing:

[Our school](#) / [Back in school again](#) (BBC) or [Together](#) (NBD) or [Everyone Matters](#) (NBD) or [When I needed a neighbour](#) (BBC)

A song to listen to: When I needed a neighbour

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=fExR7eOhJO0&feature=emb_logo



Slide 22: Sending

Leader: As we leave this place and time and go into the day ahead....

All: May our school be a place of **welcome**.



Slide 23: Reflection areas

Think: about ways in which we can be welcoming

Talk: with others about your ideas – are they all the same? Why is this?

Do: Draw round your hand. On the 'palm' or on each finger (for older children), write something they can do to be welcoming. Display these in your classroom reflection area.

Additional ideas to build spirituality:

- Leave materials out so children can make small welcome cards for new members of your community.
- Watch the video '**While we can't hug**', as a class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PnnFrPaRgY> This short video was created during COVID, but demonstrates such lovely, child-friendly ways to show you care for others. Talk about the inventive ways that Hedgehog and Tortoise find to connect with each other.
- Create a Welcome sign for the classroom door, maybe featuring some languages used by pupils in your class/school.
- Create welcome 'ritual' that could be adopted by your class at the start of every day.
- Write a welcome prayer/ blessing that could be used when a new member of staff or pupil joins the school.
- In the prayer and reflection area, could they write a prayer or thought for someone who needs a welcome? e.g. a new child at school, (reception or Yr 3 are the most obvious), someone who has moved to a new home, a refugee who has moved to a new country.
- The Blessing of the Backpacks is a thing American churches do for their children as they return to school. Some UK churches now do blessing of the Book Bags. You can find some ideas here: www.pinterest.co.uk/nscottsdaleumc/blessing-of-the-backpacks/ Some good choices are the gratitude scavenger hunt, the gratitude pick-up sticks game and the 'Find a friend who.....'



When I was.....

Gather the objects listed below to use this reflective reading together. There is also a video version here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7CaLypwQgo&feature=youtu.be> If you're using the video, the wondering questions start at 1:16' so you might want to ask these yourself.

You will need:

a plate & some food [real or role play]; a glass of water; a chain of paper people (which you can re-use in the reflection!); some dolls' clothes (or a small item of clothing such as gloves); a 'thermometer' from a role play first aid kit; a large bunch of keys.

People were always asking Jesus, 'What's important in God's kingdom?' so Jesus spoke these words:

I was hungry	<i>[lay plate of food]</i>	You shared your food
I was thirsty	<i>[lay glass of water]</i>	You gave me a drink
I was alone	<i>[lay people 'chain']</i>	You kept me company
I had no clothes	<i>[lay item of clothing]</i>	You gave me something to wear
I was ill	<i>[lay thermometer]</i>	You looked after me
I was in prison	<i>[lay keys]</i>	You visited me

***Whenever you helped someone in need you helped me.
The people who do these things are the people of God's kingdom.***

I wonder.....

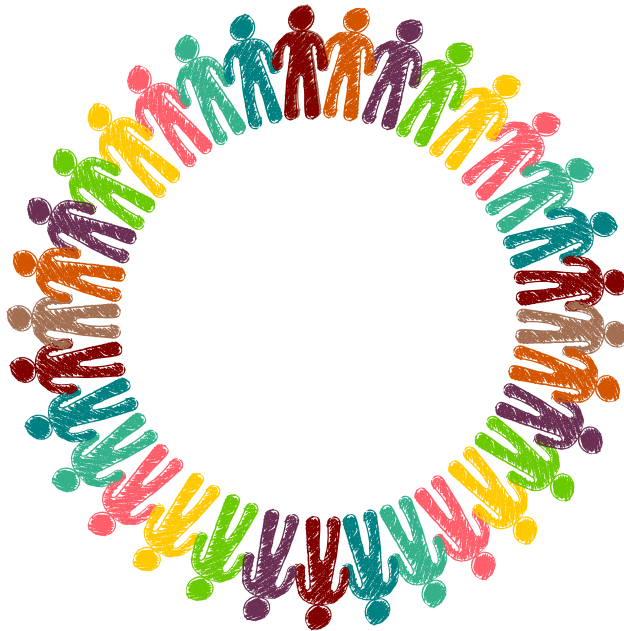
...what you think about these ideas?....

I wonder why these things might be so important to God?

Or why Jesus chose these actions as the answer to peoples' questions?

I wonder.....how might we do some of these things at this time?





Welcome!



Think about ways in which we can be welcoming.



Talk together about your ideas – are they all the same? Why is this?



Draw round your hand. On the 'palm' or on each finger, write something they can do to be welcoming.

