

Faculty of Education

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# Master of Education

Thesis submitted in part-fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education of the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.

Title: What are the implications of taking a spiritual approach to class collective worship? A case study of nine year 5 pupils in a multi-faith, Church of England school.

Name: Elisabeth Naomi Rutherford

Route: Researching Practice

Supervisor: Martin Lee

Submission Date: 20<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Word Count: 19,748

## Declaration of Practical Help

*30 hours of voluntary practical help was received to transcribe the interviews. An agreement was signed to ensure the data would be kept confidential.*

## Declaration of Originality

*'I hereby declare that the sources of which I have availed myself have been stated in the body of this thesis and in the bibliography and that the rest of the work is my own. This thesis does not exceed 20,000 words in length'*

Signature.....

## Abstract

The Education Reform Act 1988 required all pupils should, each day, “take part in an act of collective worship” which should be “broadly Christian.” However, leading worship to meet this requirement is increasingly difficult in Britain’s plural and secular society, especially when attempting to reconcile both social and contentious religious aims. This thesis explores how a purpose of promoting children’s spiritual development (through nurturing pupils’ spiritual experiences and reflection) may enable collective worship to be conceived differently, and explores the implications of ‘spiritual collective worship’ for a multi-faith class.

Four spiritual collective worships were designed for a year 5 class, drawing on Christian imagery, values and stories but making the opportunity for personal response clear. A case-study (of nine students with different beliefs) was selected to understand pupils’ perceptions of the purposes of spiritual collective worship and their value, alongside a consideration of whether it contributed to their spiritual development. Semi-structured interviews, observations and pupils’ written responses provided a variety of data sources.

The pupils identified and valued four main purposes of spiritual collective worship: having time and space to think, thinking for themselves, being together, and learning. There was a particular awareness that, although thinking for themselves was important, by reflecting together, they considered their own beliefs more effectively. The contribution to children’s spiritual development was difficult to identify and analyse. However, feeling calm and peaceful, sensing something numinous and needing to respond indicated spiritual experiences. Spiritual reflection was shown through pupils relating ideas and experiences to their past and future, although pupils occasionally did not respond. This case study therefore indicates spiritual collective worship may be able to reconcile a social and spiritual aim. Further research is now needed to study its effectiveness over a longer time, in whole school worship and across different schools.

**Key words:** collective worship, spirituality, faith school, multi-faith context, case study

## Acknowledgements

Foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor Martin Lee for his ideas, advice and direction (especially when trying to make sense of the nature of collective worship and spirituality) and for pushing me to tackle a project beyond what I initially thought was possible.

I am very grateful to the Church Schools of Cambridge Trust for funding this research and ensuring I could take time out of the classroom to interview pupil.

I would also like to thank all those who have supported me on the MEd course: those studying on the course for their discussions and insight and Liz Duignan for her help in understanding research design. I am grateful to my colleagues for their encouragement and support, and for helping me sustain my teaching through this year.

I am indebted to Jess Berry for transcribing the interview data, and to my family and friends for their love and guidance. I would particularly like to offer thanks to those who read drafts of this thesis and offered comments: Robert Rutherford, Rosalind Rutherford and Anna Ryder. In addition, heartfelt thanks go to Alistair Sutcliffe for his insight, corrections, computer skills and unceasing support throughout this year.

Finally, I could not have undertaken this thesis without the participation of my class. I would like to thank them all, but particularly the nine pupils who shared their views and deep, personal experiences so freely and honestly.



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## Introduction

The Education Reform Act 1988 contained a requirement (now enacted in the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) that “all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship”. In addition, the worship must be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.” Even in 1988 this legal requirement was contested and in Britain’s increasingly plural and secularised society, the debate has continued. The National Governor’s Association has recently called for collective worship to become non-mandatory in schools without a religious character (Paton, 2014). The recent ‘Trojan Horse’ reports, although focusing on school ethos and values, have also raised the issue of religious influences in schools (Wilshaw, 2014).

This research grew out of my interest in developing collective worship and a dilemma I faced in the classroom this year. As a Christian, and having previously worked as a church youth worker, I was interested in the role of worship in a school setting. During my PGCE, I studied pupils’ perspectives of collective worship, finding that most children recognised some purpose and value to collective worship but non-religious boys did not seem to identify any (Rutherford, 2011). In addition, some children of other faiths felt left out if withdrawn. As collective worship is statutory, I wanted to find a way to make collective more relevant for all pupils.

The importance of undertaking this research increased this year when I found myself facing difficulty in upholding the law in my own practice. I was teaching a year 5 class in a Church of England aided primary school in an urban setting. The catchment area was very diverse and attending the school were children registered as holding a variety of different faiths or none. On Tuesday afternoons, I was expected to lead class collective worship. The nature of the law and of the school’s church foundation required these to be ‘broadly Christian’. Previously I had kept my legal obligation through telling Christian stories, having a time of reflection and praying to God, doing so without much concern. Yet in my class, for the first time, were four pupils (three Muslim and one Hindu) who were withdrawn from acts of Christian collective worship on religious grounds. I was now uncertain about how to proceed.

While these four children could have been withdrawn from class collective worship containing Christian material, this did not seem appropriate. Instead, I avoided leading

collective worship if I could (failing to meet the legal obligation) or removed God and Christian material from the acts of worship altogether. Perhaps I still remained within the law by aiming to promote broadly Christian values, such as care for others; however it felt like something was missing. Times of reflection based on a stimulus such as a huddle of penguins – demonstrating the importance of working together – felt like little more than PHSE. Where was the possibility of God, especially given collective worship should be addressed to a personal God (DFE, 1994)? Was I being so careful of saying nothing about God that I was ending up saying nothing at all? These were questions I found myself asking and it encouraged me to search deeper.

To consider how I could lead class collective worship more inclusively, I looked to spirituality to provide a focus and a purpose. Nye (2009, p.9) argues spirituality “is a common, natural feature of most, probably all, children’s lives” and schools are currently required by the Education Act 2002 to promote children’s spiritual development. In addition, an Ofsted report on Religious Education and Collective Worship (1994a) suggests collective worship is an opportunity to develop children’s spirituality. Therefore looking further into children’s spirituality and considering an inclusive, spiritual approach to collective worship seemed an effective place to start and remained a significant concept throughout the research.

This research therefore grew out of my desire to find a more effective and appropriate form of class collective worship for a multi-faith, church school context. I wanted to fully meet the legal obligation whilst being inclusive for children of different religious beliefs: from atheist and agnostic to Christian and other faiths. This thesis looks at the law and guidance regarding collective worship before considering what purpose and value it might have for pupils. I will then study the nature of children’s spirituality and explore how this could be developed through a more inclusive form of collective worship. I will then explain the research design and how the collective worship sequence was created in order to meet the statutory requirements, alongside social and spiritual aims. Following this, I will set out my findings and explore these in the discussion to consider the implications of taking a spiritual approach to collective worship. Finally I will conclude by explaining how this study has influenced my practice and recommend further developments.

## Literature Review

### *What is collective worship?*

#### The Legal Requirement

The first legislation requiring a daily act of collective worship in schools was the Education Act 1944. The Education Reform Act 1988 revised this obligation and required that “all pupils in attendance at a maintained school shall on each school day take part in an act of collective worship”. It also stated the worship should be “wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character” but without “being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination”. Collective worship has never been defined in legislation but further guidance was given in Circular 1/94 (DFE, 1994), which was published to support schools to understand and comply with the law.

Circular 1/94 states worship “must in some sense reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power.” As Smith and Smith (2013) argue, the paper noted that this was the ordinary meaning of worship. Yet it then states that worship in schools will be different to corporate worship in religious institutions, since the gathered group will not hold common religious beliefs. This already suggests that collective worship in schools cannot follow this ordinary meaning. In addition, Circular 1/94 reiterates that school worship should be non-denominational, again unlike ordinary worship in churches (*ibid*). The circular therefore sets apart collective worship in schools from corporate worship in churches, leaving the required religious element of worship unclear. The question therefore remains: what is collective worship?

There is little recent research discussing the nature of collective worship. Most dates to the time of the Education Reform Act 1988, reflecting how little the current legal requirement for collective worship has changed. Arguably, the obligation is still rooted in the social and political situation of the 1980s (Smith & Smith, 2013) and even the 1940s; it is a reflection of its time. Therefore it is vital to reconsider the nature of collective worship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, although it is important to work alongside the literature from that period.

### **Collective Worship as ‘religious worship’**

As discussed, the Education Reform Act 1988 and Circular 1/94 both uphold a religious element to collective worship, although its nature remains unclear. Thatcher (1997) advocates the importance of religious worship in schools. He argues that, while the legislation is flawed due to lack of clarity, collective worship is an important opportunity for Christians “to provide religiously deprived children with glimpses into a lost tradition, as best they can” (p.20). This suggestion is Christian-centric and might seem disrespectful towards the beliefs of others, both religious and non-religious. However, others argue more moderately about the need for a religious element to collective worship. Copley (1997) suggests the removal of collective worship would leave an entirely secularised curriculum. He argues that collective worship provides an important counterpoint to the rest of the curriculum, although he does not consider whether religious education alone could do this.

Conversely, The National Secular Society has long called for compulsory collective worship in schools to end and, at the time of writing, is promoting a petition to remove the legal requirement (Evans, 2014). Hull (1975) claims worship (which assumes belief) and education (which scrutinises belief) “cannot take place concurrently” (p.59). This contrasts with Copley’s argument and seems unconvincing because some aspects of life cannot be taught through scrutiny. A holistic education necessarily exposes pupils to a full range of forms of belief, mirroring those held across society, and nurturing pupils in their own understanding of them. Felderhof (1999) agrees that Hull’s philosophy was flawed as education involves scrutiny and experience, and argues there is no reason that worship cannot take place in schools.

A greater claim for the ending of religious worship in schools is more practical: any presumption of participants’ beliefs can prevent the building of social cohesion and a shared school ethos. As Cheetham (2004) suggests, collective can be understood as the gathering together of a school community, which Gent (1989, p.37) points out will be “a gathering of people from many different cultural and religious backgrounds”. If there is a focus of Christian reverence to a divine being or power then, without an inclusive approach, the “unifying force” (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) that collective worship can create will be undermined. Webster (1990) suggests there may be other more acceptable forms of religious worship, such as inter-faith worship. Yet even if this model was to be successful, despite differences in the beliefs of different faiths, it still does not give provision

for agnostics and atheists. Therefore, from the literature, there is no clear way forward if collective worship is regarded as a form of fully religious worship.

### **Collective worship as ‘worth-ship’**

With no clear path to consensus over religious collective worship, researchers have considered whether non-religious worship could exist in the school setting. Hull (1975) wrote before the Education Reform Act 1988 that there had been a gradual move from ‘literal worship’ to more secular worship. This distinction is recognized by Slee (1990, p.5) who states that worship can be understood in two different ways: as an explicitly religious term of reverence to a divine being or power (fully religious worship) and as ‘worth-ship’, a celebration of shared values or a “response to what is seen to be of ultimate concern”. Slee argues worth-ship does not require participating individuals to hold a religious belief, nor does it exclude those who do.

On first glance, worth-ship seems an inclusive and satisfactory definition of collective worship. However, there are still two issues to be addressed with this definition. First, if worth-ship require no religious element, what values or ultimate concerns should be celebrated, and can these be shared? Inglis (2012, p.97) suggests that a “market-place of values,” that pupils can choose to subscribe to, may be the most effective base for collective worship; although Cheetham’s (2004) argument that not all beliefs and values are equally valid warns against this approach. Cheetham also emphasises the content of collective worship should not rely entirely on one teacher’s decision, even if they often make a good judgement.

One approach to solve this is to base collective worship on a set of shared values. However, Smith and Smith (2013) found that, despite having an agreed set of values laid out for the national curriculum, teachers in four primary schools were generally unaware of them and did not use them. They also suggested the values were so vague and culturally linked that they were not a useful basis for developing collective worship. Wadham (1997) suggests church schools can rely on Christianity to inform their sense of value but that all schools should make their underlying values apparent. For this thesis, given the current legislation and the church school context, Christian values seem the most appropriate basis for collective worship. However a question remains about whether this is the case for all schools.

A second issue with worth-ship is that Slee claims it can take children to a ‘threshold of religious worship’ but does not explain what this threshold is or how pupils can be supported in going beyond it if they desire. In my previous research, pupils suggested that ‘sharing assemblies’ (focused on sharing the value of student achievement) were not really worship because they did not involve a religious element (Rutherford, 2011). Some might argue this is not important for most children. Yet Francis (1992) found secondary students often kept their beliefs private, meaning peers underestimated them. With God evidently important to some children, collective worship should provide an opportunity for children to cross the ‘threshold’ and worship if they wish. Indeed, Circular 1/94 states that collective worship should be able to elicit a response, but explicitly recognizes the choice of each pupil to engage as they wish (DFE, 1994). A form of collective worship is therefore required which offers the opportunity for differentiated personal response.

#### A definition of collective worship

Collective worship is “treading a fine line between many competing forces” (Cheetham, 2004, p.10) and schools are “being challenged to develop a unique kind of experience” (Gent 1989, p.9). Nevertheless, this experience remains undefined over twenty five years after the Education Reform Act 1988. An absence of a statutory definition, alongside a lack of consensus in the literature, demonstrate there is no easy solution to finding a shared understanding of collective worship. However, for the purposes of this thesis, a working definition is needed. Given the current legislation and the church school context of this research, the definition I will use is:

Collective worship is the gathering together of members of the school community to reflect on matters of ultimate concern (presently based on broadly Christian beliefs and values). It must provide an opportunity for pupils to respond individually, either to the transcendent or their own sense of what is of ultimate concern.

However, it is not enough to know the legal obligation for collective worship and how this is best understood practically. To lead collective worship effectively, it is important for teachers to understand the possible benefits for pupils they may try to achieve.



### *What is the purpose of collective worship?*

The legislation concerning collective worship does not indicate the rationale behind the requirement. Nevertheless, collective worship takes time which could otherwise be spent learning in lessons; thus it should benefit the pupils. However, there is evidence this is not always the case. McCreery (1990) reported that students found collective worship disheartening, often being an occasion for teachers and pupils to endure rather than enjoy, where they were passive receivers rather than actively involved. Cheetham (2004) argues one of the major difficulties with the collective worship legislation is the confusion over the purpose of collective worship. It is thus important to study the literature for possible aims of collective worship, recognising there are a variety of conflicting viewpoints which should be taken into account.

#### **A social purpose**

First, the term ‘collective’ requires people to come together and suggests a social aim of building a sense of school community and developing a shared ethos (Cheetham, 2004). Gill (2000) conducted a wide-ranging study involving questionnaires, observations and interviews with teachers and pupils from primary and secondary schools. She found that most teachers supported assembling together, believing pupils gained a sense of identity and belonging in the school community. Even teachers who thought collective worship was of little benefit for pupils commented on the positive impact of meeting together. In my previous study, I also found that students recognised the value in coming together as a whole school, even if this meant that material was not always age appropriate (Rutherford, 2011). A social purpose of gathering together for a shared activity therefore seems widely accepted.

#### **A moral purpose**

A second suggested purpose of collective worship is a moral aim of encouraging good behaviour (Cheetham, 2004). Whilst the concept of ‘good’ behaviour is unspecific and subjective, it can be linked with the social aim of building a shared ethos or, in this case, a shared understanding of how to act within the school and wider community. Again, Gill (2000) established that many teachers thought pupils would gain a sense of moral responsibility through shared acts of worship. Her 2004 study of pupils’ beliefs also supports a moral purpose with those interviewed wanting collective worship to be more realistic and deal with ‘day-to-day’ problems. This suggests that the pupils wanted collective worship to

give guidance about how to live their everyday life. Ofsted's (1994a) report on collective worship suggested that more specific links could be made between morality and religious beliefs; however I would suggest moral and religious purposes can still be considered separate.

### An educational purpose

Another possible purpose of collective worship is educational (Cheetham, 2004). It has been suggested that, by being present during an act of collective worship, pupils learn what worship as part of faith community is like and learn about religious beliefs too. The Durham Report (Ramsey, 1970) recommended that experiencing worship was an important part of religious education, suggesting it was partly viewed as a learning opportunity. In contrast, Thatcher (1997) argues that, because schools are not religious communities, children will not fully experience what religious worship is like. He suggests pupils would instead gain a better sense of worship from visiting a faith community or, I would add, from talking to religious believers about their experiences. However, Thatcher's argument unhelpfully implies that school collective worship is inferior to corporate worship, rather than an explicitly different form (DFE, 1994).

Additionally, it is thought pupils gain an increased awareness and understanding of different religions through collective worship. This may often be the case; however Gill (2004) found that secondary-aged pupils had some difficulty in distinguishing different faiths from collective worship. In addition, Gill (*ibid.*) also found children stopped listening if they did not believe the religious element in collective worship and therefore would not learn. Hence the educational purpose may be more effectively achieved without a disputed religious element.

### A religious purpose

A final suggested and highly contested purpose of collective worship is a religious aim of nurturing children's faith. This is the most contentious aim and raises the question of whether children of many faiths and none can and should be nurtured in faith by schools. It is highly questionable whether a religious aim is legitimate for schools at all.

Gill found that both secondary and primary aged pupils thought collective worship did not nurture their beliefs but forced faith upon them. During interviews conducted, one ten year old said, “assemblies try and make you believe in it” (Gill, 2004, p.188). Another child thought that the assemblies, “try and relate [*s/c*] you into Christians when you don’t really want to be” (Gill, 2000, p.114). These comments suggest these pupils were not having their own faith nurtured, and that collective worship was undermining Article 14 of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – “children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights.” Collective worship cannot nurture children’s faith if it does not start from pupils’ own individual beliefs.

Cheetham (2004) suggests there will always be a clash between assisting pupils to develop their own religious beliefs and values whilst also promoting a shared ethos within the school community. There therefore appears to be an irresolvable issue in reconciling a social and religious aim. However this view focuses on children’s individual religious beliefs, which schools are not required by law to develop. Rather than nurturing pupils’ faith, it is more appropriate to consider how collective worship may promote the development of children’s spirituality.

### A spiritual purpose

All schools are currently required to promote the “spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society” through the curriculum (Education Act 2002). Often opportunities for spiritual development are linked closely to collective worship, although Ofsted inspectors also consider if it is promoted in every lesson (Ofsted, 2014). The term ‘spiritual’ is not considered synonymous with ‘religious’ (Ofsted, 1994b); therefore it seems far more appropriate and relevant for schools to have a spiritual aim for collective worship. Parffrey (1997, p.39) has even suggested that collective worship might be better understood as “an opportunity for collective spirituality”. Moreover, the Rt Rev John Pritchard, Chair of the Church of England's Board of Education, has recently suggested that Christian worship in non-faith schools should be re-framed as ‘spiritual reflection’ (Bingham, 2014). It therefore seems most appropriate to not only have a spiritual purpose to collective worship, but to actually use this spiritual aim to inspire a new form of collective worship.

Nonetheless, to consider what 'spiritual collective worship' may be based on and whether it can nurture all children's spirituality, it is important to understand and define what spirituality is. It can then be considered whether, unlike with religious nurture, every child's spirituality can be developed through collective worship, while maintaining a social benefit of building a shared ethos.

### *What is spirituality?*

Throughout the literature, the definition of 'spirituality' has consistently been considered elusive. Eade (2003) argues this is for three main reasons: that many of the activities associated with spirituality are, by nature, beyond words; that it has many associations which affect how every individual understands it; and that it seems to have been deliberately used (in educational policy at least) as a vague term that is accepted more widely than 'religious'. It is the latter two arguments that seem to particularly account for the difficulty in defining spirituality. People with different religious or non-religious backgrounds and beliefs bring different understandings to a term that is imprecise (Hay & Nye, 2006).

For some, the concept of describing spirituality through examples, or defining the term through different perspectives is considered more appropriate (Hyde, 2008). This allows for people to understand spirituality differently. Davies (2007) found that head teachers in Wales varied in their understanding of spirituality, with those leading church schools more likely to have a traditional (religious) understanding of spirituality. However, as schools are required to develop all children spiritually, it is vital to find an inclusive definition. It is therefore important to study the literature about children's spirituality to understand how the concept of spirituality has developed, how the nature of spirituality can be interpreted for the context of school collective worship and how it will be defined for this research.

### The origins of spirituality

The term 'spirituality' was first used in education in the Education Act 1944, arguably as a term that would be considered more inclusive than religion. However, the concept of spirituality has long been considered outside education. Andrew Wright (2000) has written a detailed history of how our understanding of spirituality has developed, but the focus of this study is on the last thirty years when research into children's spirituality has flourished. This research mainly developed to address the limitations in works by Hardy (1979) and Robinson

(1977) who found that adults often referred to key spiritual experiences from childhood, but who did not actually interview children themselves.

### **Children's spirituality**

The work of Hay and Nye grew out of the perspective that spirituality is natural in all human beings, but noted that there was a "shortage of detailed information about the spiritual life of children" (Hay & Nye, 2006, p.9). They therefore aimed to dispel this difficulty in understanding children's spirituality by interviewing children themselves and then reflecting on what they said, inductively drawing out key themes. They then formed a new definition for what they believed to be a "common, natural feature of most, probably all, children's lives" (Nye, 2009, p.9).

Their main conclusion was that underpinning the different expressions of spirituality is a core category of "relational consciousness" (Hay & Nye, 2006, p.109) where children understand their place in the world in relation to other things and people in it. Hay and Nye argue that this 'relational consciousness' has four layers – the child relating to self, to others, to the world and to God. Perhaps the most controversial of these layers is the child-God category, as this excludes non-believers from a concept that is also considered to be universal. However, Wright (2000, p.43) describes this category as the "ultimate order of things". Although some would disagree with this more open category, Comte-Sponville supports the concept in his personal account of atheist spirituality.

Whether or not you believe in God, you are confronted with the infinite, the eternal and the absolute – and with yourself. To be an atheist is not to deny the existence of the absolute; rather, it is to deny its transcendence ... it is to deny that the absolute is God.  
(Comte-Sponville, 2007, p.136-7).

Therefore, Wright's category is able to include religious believers who understand this 'ultimate order of things' to come from or to be God, without excluding those who are agnostic or atheist, who may instead relate to the incomprehensible complexity of the natural world.

It is also important to note the 'consciousness' observed by Hay and Nye (2006) was defined as "an unusual level of consciousness or perceptiveness, relative to other passages of conversation spoken by that child" (p.109). This leaves the perception of spirituality very

open to interpretation. However as it has been widely observed that children have heightened awareness of particular events or moments, it seems they are a real phenomenon. In addition, whilst the boundary of what makes an experience or idea heightened is perhaps blurred, the fact that children choose to share particular events or thoughts indicate there is a level of understanding - of the child and those around them - that some moments are special.

Another important aspect of research into children's spirituality is whether the claim to universality can be accepted, especially as only a few children have been researched in each study, from which it is difficult to make wide-scale generalizations. Furthermore, investigating children's spirituality is a very difficult task, with researchers finding that "children's spirituality could not be divorced from their individuality" (Hay & Nye, 2006, p.107) and that "it is difficult to define the way in which children view their world" (Erricker, Erricker, Ota, Sullivan, & Fletcher, 1997, p.30). Another difficulty that Hay and Nye (2006) made clear was that children found it difficult to express their spirituality, often relying on religious language which perhaps did not reflect their actual experiences. If the children found it difficult to express their individual spirituality, then it is very difficult for researchers to do so.

By trying to find a universal understanding of spirituality, Hay and Nye's argument is particularly susceptible to critique. Although their themes and codes were identified from the interview data, their research could be seen to force children's expressions of the spirituality into one of four categories, which perhaps does not reveal the deep reflections they suggest children have. However, schools are expected to promote all children's spiritual development, so educators must consider spirituality a part of all children's lives. Therefore this thesis will treat spirituality as a universal feature of childhood.

### Can spirituality be non-religious?

I have so far argued that spirituality is not exclusively religious, a view supported by Comte-Sponville (2007, p.136) who says, "all religions involve spirituality, at least to some extent, but all forms of spirituality are not religious." However other researchers disagree, often arguing that by trying to make the concept of spirituality universal, it becomes meaningless as it is no longer rooted in a coherent tradition of understanding. Markham (1999, p.143) suggests that "in an attempt to become all inclusive, the word is in danger of becoming meaningless." Thatcher (1999), evidently coming from a Christian perspective, takes this

further and argues that “it is far from obvious that spirituality without theology is even coherent” (p.4). Yet Thatcher’s perspective does not seem to fit the findings of those who have spoken in detail to children about their spiritual experiences. Children who do not have a detailed comprehension of theology do seem to have spiritual experiences, and beliefs about the source of these experiences should not be imposed upon them.

While Thatcher’s view of spirituality is very exclusive, Grey (1999) proposes that spirituality cannot be individual and isolated, with “rich moral sources to be mined from traditions, as well as new dimensions being discovered” (p.14). Grey’s suggestion to draw on traditions is powerful because she does not imply that spirituality can only be meaningful within a particular religious belief. She thus supports the universality of spirituality but considers how children themselves make sense of their experiences, with the support of adults (who are ‘mystics’ themselves) and traditional understandings. Erricker and Erricker (1999) and Eade (2003) agree with Grey, suggesting that adults can offer their own experience and judgment to support children’s spirituality as long as they do not try to convert children’s experiences to fit within their own views; adults have the potential to either encourage or suppress a child’s personal spiritual journey. Schweitzer (2005) takes this even further, arguing that to not address a child’s need for support, affirmation and guidance in order to answer big questions, adults would “fail the child in an important respect” (p.108).

It seems therefore that the debate over spirituality is not about its existence but human understanding of its source and how it can be developed. Wright (2000, p.96) makes this distinction clear: “What is needed is a pedagogy capable of addressing both the universality of humanity’s spiritual aspirations and the actuality of distinct spiritual traditions.”

### Spirituality as experience and reflection

As the debates about spirituality seem to focus not on the existence of spirituality but the source and understanding of that spirituality, there seems to be a difference between a person’s spirituality and their spiritual experiences. I would argue therefore that there are two aspects of spirituality, often considered synonymous under the term ‘spirituality’, but that can be treated separately. Spirituality seems to be informed by both spiritual experiences (moments of heightened awareness) and spiritual reflection (a consideration of what these experiences and other ideas mean for the individual) in relation to themselves, others, the world and the ultimate order of things. This distinction seems to be recognised by Kay and

Nye (1996, p.19), although focusing on spiritual values, who discuss the “process of the pursuit of spirituality” (opening oneself up to experience) and the “results of that pursuit” (a reflection of that experience). However, it is also important to recognise that the distinction does not mean there is a simple division between experience and reflection. For example, some reflections may have such sudden clarity that they become experiences in their own right.

Yet, by separating these two aspects of spirituality it is then possible to suggest that having spiritual experiences is a universal feature of childhood but that the reflection on will be individual, and for some, limited. For others it will be informed by values, tradition and their new insight. In this way, spirituality is both universal and individual.

### A definition of spirituality

In order to promote spiritual development in an educational setting, it is important to find an understanding of spirituality that best reflects all pupils. Through studying the literature, it seems that spirituality is universal for all children, however the source, meaning or authenticity of that spirituality leads to controversy about whether there can be one, inclusive definition. It also seems that adults are defining for children how and why they are spiritual rather than allowing children the freedom, whilst offering support and guidance, to understand this for themselves. Hence I have suggested how spirituality can be separated into two parts – one a possibly universal human experience, the other a culturally constructed reflection. For the purposes of this thesis, spirituality will therefore be defined as follows:

Spirituality is the combination of spiritual experiences (moments of heightened awareness) and spiritual reflection (a consideration, based on tradition and insight, of what these moments and other ideas mean for the individual) in relation to themselves, others, the world and the ultimate order of things.

Of course, there are still difficulties with this definition, particularly how subjective it is. Similar moments of heightened awareness may be recognised as spiritual by one individual and not by another. However, this is where the guidance of others and having a framework or tradition which children can use to acknowledge or dismiss experiences as spiritual may enable a shared understanding. For such a personal element of experience, it seems important to have an open definition, which unavoidably leads to this measure of subjectivity.



### *How can children's spirituality be developed?*

In order for collective worship to be able to accomplish a spiritual aim, it is important to consider how children's spirituality can be developed. It is not an easy task, especially as Nye (2009) suggests that spirituality in children is more common than in adults. If this is the case, it seems that children need to be nurtured to continue to develop their spirituality and not inhibit it. The definition I am using implies two areas of children's spirituality that can be nurtured through collective worship: spiritual experience and spiritual reflection. I will therefore explore different ways that these can be developed, based on the literature.

#### Nurturing spiritual experience

Spiritual experience seems the more difficult aspect of spirituality to develop. James (1902), although discussing religious rather than spiritual experiences, argues that religious experiences are ineffable, noetic, transient and passive. If spiritual experiences are also passive, then there is a clear difficulty: children cannot give themselves spiritual experiences and so adults cannot provide them either.

However, it may be possible to create an environment where spiritual experiences and reflection are more likely. West-Burnham and Huws Jones (2007, p.57) argue "community is one of the most powerful vehicles for developing spiritual understanding." They suggest this is because children develop a sense of identity through community, needing others both to learn about and to be fully human. This idea seems to link to Hay and Nye's (2006) idea that spirituality is relational and Hull's (1998, p.6) suggestion that "spirituality exists not inside people, but between them". This all implies that having a strong sense of a school or class as a community, rather than an organization, is important for nurturing children's spirituality (West-Burnham & Huws Jones, 2007).

A second part of creating a suitable environment seems to be marking a time and space that is set aside. Religious communities have buildings to go for worship together but in schools space needs to be created every time. White (2000), from incorporating 'reflection time' into her own teaching practice, suggests the use of suitable music and lighting a candle in order to provide a focus for pupils. This seems to have been successful at marking the 'reflection time' and creating a nurturing environment as one child commented, "I like when the candle's on because you can think about anything" while another said, "It gives you peace".

Both these remarks suggest the pupils connected the candle with a time when they could think or be peaceful, and therefore the ‘reflection time’ was clearly created and marked as different from the rest of the school day.

Finally, stillness seems to be an important part of creating a time for spiritual experience and reflection. Copley (1992) argues silence can be a powerful tool to enable spiritual development, if it is reflective and guided. West-Burnham and Huws Jones (2007, p.116) take this further by suggesting it is necessary: “Any approach to...spiritual development that seeks to create authentic, personal responses has to engage with reflection and stillness.” In addition, if spiritual experiences are passive (James, 1902), this implies pupils have to stop to experience something unexpected.

Overall, for collective worship to develop pupils’ spiritual experience, the literature points to three key aspects: developing a sense of community, marking a clear time and space and having a time of silence, stillness or reflection. White (2000, p.5) explains how she envisaged ‘reflection time’, which supports the three aspects identified:

I wanted to create a space and a calm time within which children would be left alone, not physically of course, but alone in the sense of nothing being directly asked of them other than to sit and to listen.

### Nurturing spiritual reflection

The three aspects highlighted as nurturing spiritual experience will also be important for nurturing spiritual reflection because they enable a time and space away “from the busyness of life, to ponder questions of deeper significance” (Eaude, 2008, p.79). However, there are three more ways the literature suggests will enable spiritual reflection.

First, pupils require something to spiritually reflect on. Sometimes pupils will be able to reflect on their own experiences or questions; however, McCreery (1996) discovered that children found it easiest to talk about (and thus reflect on) their spirituality when they had a story to relate to their own lives. In addition, as pupils are often reflecting on abstract concepts, Erricker and Erricker (1996) found children used metaphors to explain their spirituality. Providing pupils with a story or idea can therefore help them reflect on their spirituality through a different frame of reference. Eaude (2008) supports this theory when he

suggests that stories help children to imagine and explore their spiritual ideas without possibly anxiety of speaking directly about themselves.

Secondly, West-Burnham and Huws Jones (2007) suggest that spiritual development requires not ‘shallow’ learning, but ‘deep’ and even ‘profound’ forms, where it becomes personal to the learner. They argue that “profound learning moves [people] from religious observance to spirituality” (p.48), with pupils having greater ownership of their own beliefs and understanding. To develop spiritually, they suggest pupils’ reflections should move from considering ‘what’ to ‘how’ to ‘why’ in order to become more spiritually developed.

However, while encouraging pupils to seek understanding through profound learning, it is also vital for developing spirituality to show there are not certain answers to be reached. West-Burnham and Huws Jones (2007) discuss how spirituality is like a journey, searching for meaning not reaching an end point of complete understanding. This can be difficult though, especially if the child is dealing with difficult or painful questions, which de Souza (2012, p.291) describes as “the dark side of spirituality”. Eade (2008, p.18) suggests, “Adults often think they should have conclusive answers, rather than help the child to keep wondering.” One of the important elements of a Christian approach (called Godly Play) to developing children’s spirituality is wondering. In this context, Nye (2007, para.7) argues that “engagement with the sacred should prompt us, at any age, to attempt to articulate our sense of mystery rather than mastery.” Although, in school collective worship, I am considering engagement with the spiritual, it does seem relevant to facilitate children to reflect by wondering, rather than reaching understanding.

In order to nurture children’s spiritual reflection therefore, it is important for children to have stories to provide metaphors or ideas for exploring their own spirituality; to facilitate children thinking deeply to form their own, individual understanding and an emphasis on continuing to wonder.

### *Listening to pupils’ voices*

The literature on children’s spirituality demonstrates an important aspect of undertaking research in this area. Both Erricker et al. (1997) and Hay and Nye (2006) emphasise the importance of hearing children’s voices in order to more fully understand their experiences. Also, “children are expert witnesses” (Alexander, 2010, p.143) and so are likely to be able to

give the best insight into their own experiences. To reflect fully on how children responded to acts of spiritual collective worship, it is important to hear the voices of those who experienced it. This research was therefore focused on how children respond to spiritual collective worship.

## Rationale and Research Questions

Overall, from the literature, it was clear that a form of collective worship was needed that could achieve both a social and spiritual aim: enabling children of all beliefs to come together whilst developing every unique individual's spirituality. However, it also needed to meet the legal requirements and be 'broadly Christian'. I therefore wanted to design a form of collective worship ('spiritual collective worship') that might be able to meet these aims.

To design this 'spiritual collective worship', I drew on the ways indicated in the literature for how children's spirituality could be developed: through nurturing children's spiritual experiences and reflections. I discuss the spiritual collective worship that I created in the 'Overview of the Spiritual Collective Worship Sequence' chapter. However, overall, it was designed to meet my definition of spiritual collective worship:

Spiritual collective worship is the gathering together of members of the school community to reflect on matters of ultimate concern and should focus on developing one **of the four strands of children's 'relational consciousness': self, others, the world and the ultimate order of things.** While drawing on Christian beliefs and values, spiritual collective worship should be inclusive, providing an opportunity for pupils to respond individually, according to their personal beliefs.

To understand if and how this form of worship was effective, it was important to identify the benefits of spiritual collective worship for pupils and how these related to the suggested purposes from the literature. It was also important to establish if the purposes the pupils identified were valued by them, otherwise the spiritual collective worship would not have been effective. It was particularly crucial to discover whether social and a spiritual aims were accomplished, as I have found in my practice, and the literature suggests, that these are difficult to reconcile. I therefore needed to investigate if all the pupils were able to fully participate and whether it contributed to their spiritual development. The research therefore had to maintain a focus on the voices of the pupils who experience it.

In order to consider the implications of taking a spiritual approach to collective worship, I needed to answer two key research questions:

1. What do pupils find to be the purposes of spiritual collective worship and do they value them?
2. Does spiritual collective worship contribute to pupils' spiritual development?

## Research Design

To enable close scrutiny of this research, I will give a full account of the research design. I will first define the theoretical terminology and the steps of the research process. Next I will discuss the decisions made at each stage and explain how these were appropriate for my purpose of study, alongside the limitations I considered. Finally, I will give an account of the ethical considerations made throughout this study.

### *Overview of the research process*

Crotty (1998) argues there are four key aspects of the research design to make clear and justify. For Crotty, these four aspects form a hierarchy, with the researcher's epistemology (the theory of knowledge) underlying the whole research process, informing all the other choices made. This is followed by the theoretical perspective – the approach taken to the research – which, in turn, informs the methodology (a clear strategy). Finally, the methods, the choice of techniques and procedures used to gather and analyse data, can then be chosen. This hierarchical research process is supported by Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2009) who describe the process as a pyramid, with each concept built onto the researcher's original understanding of the nature of reality and knowledge.

In contrast, Creswell (2004) argues the different concepts in the research process give insight to each other. While I agree that all these aspects are highly inter-connected, a hierarchical process seems necessary. It ensures there is a consistent research design by beginning at the underlying epistemology, because our theory of knowledge informs the rest of the research process. I am therefore following the research process presented by Crotty (1998). The research design, following this process, is illustrated in Figure 1.

### *Epistemology*

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge that underlies the whole research process; “it is a way of looking at the world and making sense of it” (Crotty, 1998, p.7). It is crucial to start with the epistemology in the research process as it “is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate” (Maynard, 1994, p.10). Thus the

epistemology focuses the researcher to decide what knowledge to research and then consider how to do this.

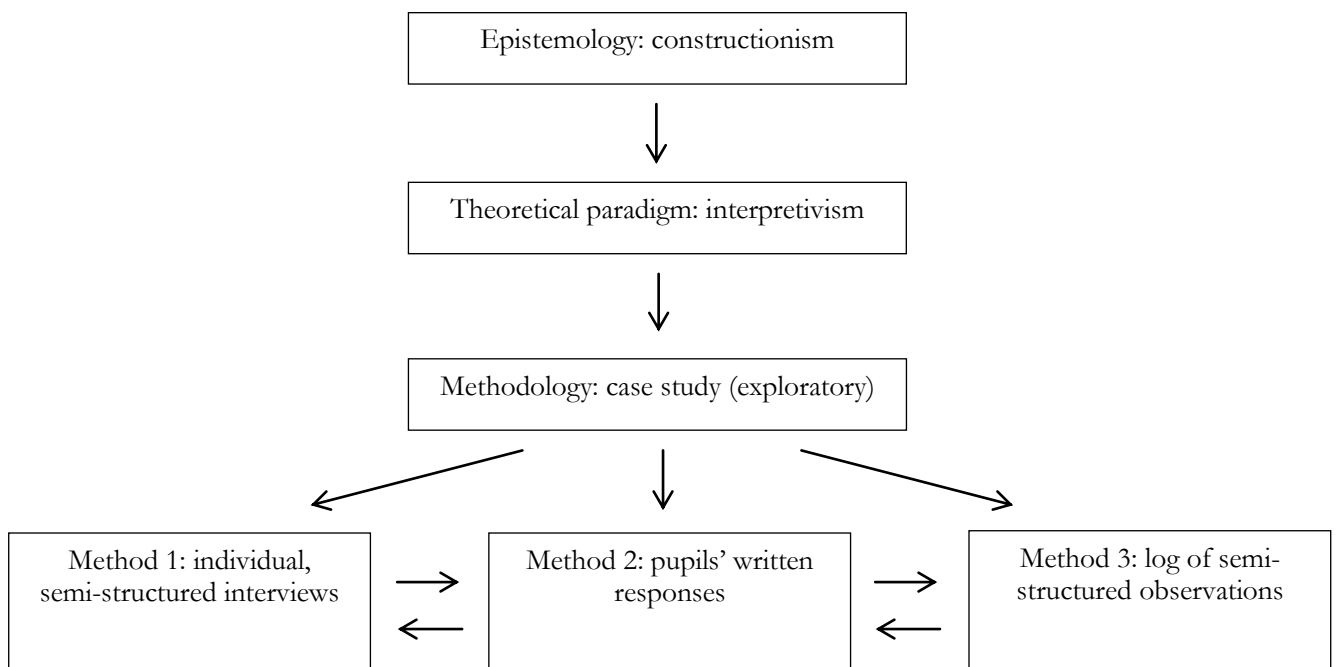


Figure 1: The research design. The diagram illustrates the hierarchical process, as described by Crotty (1998), and the triangulation between the different methods used.

There are three main epistemologies: objectivism, constructionism and subjectivism. In undertaking this research I have taken a constructionist approach, believing that “truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world” (Crotty, 1998, p.8). Constructionism rejects the objectivist view that there are ‘truths’ in the world for humans to discover. Instead meaning is constructed through interplay between humans and the world they live in. This means that “different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon” (*ibid.*, p.9). The constructionist view is appropriate for this research as collective worship is a cultural construct which people will understand in different ways.

However, Butler-Kisber (2010, p.5) refers to an “ontological continuum”, suggesting that there is a spectrum of understanding about the nature of reality and (inextricably linked) our knowledge about it. The concept of an epistemological spectrum seems particularly useful for one part of this research where the ‘object’ is each pupil’s spirituality. As spirituality is not a



physical object, it is harder to establish how similar the phenomenon could be for different individuals and hence the extent of interplay between the object and the individual in forming meaning. This aspect of the research is therefore considered to be on a spectrum between constructionism and subjectivism, but overall this study takes a constructionist epistemology.

### *Theoretical perspective*

The theoretical perspective links the philosophical viewpoint to a more concrete research approach, and so must be appropriate for the epistemological stance. As the epistemology used for this research is constructionism, an interpretive theoretical perspective is required. Interpretivists believe there can be multiple perspectives of reality to identify, rather than a single 'truth' that is sought in positivism (Hennick, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Henn et al. (2009) argue interpretivism is needed because the "complexities of the social world demand an altogether different approach, which acknowledges those qualities peculiar to the human condition" (p.15). It requires researchers to seek understanding from the perspectives of the participants (the *emic* perspective), rather than from their own frame of reference (the *etic* perspective). Interpretivism is therefore an effective approach for understanding the participants' different perspectives of collective worship because it enables researchers "to explore or build up an understanding of something of which we have little or no knowledge" (Henn et al. 2009, p.16), in this case, the impact of spiritual collective worship.

There are though drawbacks to the interpretivist theoretical perspective. Positivists would argue that it does not lead to valid or reliable data, because it lacks objectivity and is unrepeatable. While this is true in the positivist sense, finding one objective truth is not considered desirable because interpretivists, with a constructionist epistemology, do not believe it exists. Instead only by being subjective and human themselves can researchers begin to understand other people's perceptions and make meaning from them (Counsell, 2009). In addition, as Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p.31) argue, "all research is interpretive; it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied."

Interpretivists therefore focus on minimising researcher bias through an awareness of their subjectivity (Hennick et al., 2011). Often this is through reflexivity, a process of constant self-reflection throughout the research. Pillow (2003, p.179) argues that reflexivity "is often used to potentially validate and legitimize the research precisely by raising questions about

the research process” but questions of its ‘success’ should remain open. It is therefore important I remained aware of my bias and subjectivity in this research, for example, my Christian beliefs. As well as making the research design and my subjectivity clear to increase the credibility of the data, it is also important to use a range of carefully considered data sources to base interpretation on (which will be discussed in the methodology and methods subchapters).

### *Methodology*

The methodology is the overall “plan of action” (Crotty, 1998, p.7). For this research, a case study methodology was chosen to look in detail at pupils’ perceptions of spiritual collective worship. Although Crotty describes case study as a method, I am following Stake (1995), who classifies case studies as a methodology. Yin (2003) describes case studies as an investigation of a phenomenon in a natural setting, drawing on multiple sources of evidence (the methods) and Simons (2009, p.3) explains its purpose: “to explore ... the uniqueness of a single case.” Case studies therefore aim to achieve an “in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p.11), vital for understanding the different views of the participants in detail.

For this research, the focus of the study was the impact of four class collective worships, planned and led with a spiritual approach. Although this was a change to my practice, a case study methodology was chosen to enable the valuable perspectives and insights of the pupils to be sought and rich, descriptive data to be gained. The case was conceived to be ‘exploratory’ and ‘intrinsic’ (Stake, 1995), to discover and understand a small group’s views about spiritual collective worship in more detail.

The case was defined by two distinctive boundaries. First, the research was conducted in a year 5 class at Church of England aided primary school in a multi-faith, urban setting. In order to research pupils’ perceptions in more depth, the case was further bound as nine children, chosen to reflect a wide range of different perspectives that could bring the greatest variety of insight. After an RE lesson on different beliefs, the pupils identified their own form of belief and two children were then chosen from each category of belief represented in the class: Christian, other faith (Hindu and Muslim), theist and agnostic. One additional self-defined agnostic was also chosen who reflected views closest to atheism (such as the world being created by chance). Children of both genders and a range of abilities were also

represented within the case, again with the aim of hearing a diversity of responses. Table 1 shows details of the pupils selected for the case.

Table 1: Pupils in the case

Name	Self-defined belief
Daniel	Christian
Alissa	Christian
Yasir	Muslim
Sanjiv	Hindu
Matthew	Theist
Sam	Theist
Olivia	Agnostic
Ollie	Agnostic
Isobel	Agnostic-atheist

Table 1 shows the nine children in the case and their self-identified belief. It should be noted Isobel self-defined as an agnostic but showed some atheist beliefs, like the world being created by chance. I therefore categorised her as agnostic-atheist.

There are of course limitations to case study research which need to be considered. In particular, the advantage of studying a unique case in depth means that generalisation is not possible as the case is not designed to be representative of the wider population (Thomas, 2011). However, Simons (2009) believes as long as the distinctive features of the case are made clear, others can make inferences from it, considering how the findings may apply in their own context. This research therefore offers this ‘reliability’ rather than ‘generalisability’ (Basse, 1981). Studying a unique and bounded case also means that the researcher has to show the findings have trustworthiness, as they are not repeatable. One of the most important ways to increase credibility is to research from different angles to give a richer, more balanced view (Thomas, 2011). Triangulation is the process of drawing on evidence from multiple sources and methods to give findings more credibility (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). When data from different sources reveals similar themes, this adds credibility to the findings (although the data from each source must still be trustworthy in itself and come from a carefully chosen method). It was therefore important to select multiple methods to provide data from different sources, while ensuring each method was rigorous and transparent to give trustworthy data itself.

## *Methods*

The methods employed are the “concrete techniques of procedures we plan to use” (Crotty 1998, p.6). In order to gain rich, in-depth data about the case, individual interviews were chosen as the main method (Robson, 2011) to question and probe the participants in detail. However, to triangulate with the findings and increase their credibility, written responses created by the pupils and observations were used to gain insight into the participants’ responses at the time. It was vital to ensure that the methods were ethical and that participants would feel comfortable. In the next sections I will discuss each method used and justify why it was the best approach for answering the research questions, while being ethical. Finally, I will consider each method’s limitations and I explain how I sought to overcome these.

### **Individual, semi-structured interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for two reasons. First, their flexibility allows the interviewer to probe or prompt the participant to discuss their perceptions in depth and ensure meanings are fully understood on both sides (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Secondly, a semi-structured approach ensures the participant has more control over the research process and so can raise issues the researcher may not have considered (Henn et al., 2009). This is particularly important for uncovering ideas and perceptions in exploratory case study research. It is also ethical, enabling participants to share in the process of gathering data.

Furthermore, the semi-structured approach enables a more natural conversational style and a rapport to be developed, encouraging participants to speak more freely and to remain comfortable in the situation (Burgess, 1984). As their teacher, the pupils were more likely to build a rapport with me than an unknown researcher. However, some children may have felt more uncomfortable knowing me, especially as the discussion of beliefs and spiritual experiences is personal (Nesbitt, 2000). In addition, I chose individual interviews so pupils could speak freely about their personal experiences without feeling pressured by peers (Steward, Shamdasani & Rook, 2007). By making these considerations, the children were more likely to speak openly and truthfully, making the research more trustworthy.

However, as I was interviewing pupils from my own class, the children may have tried to say what they thought I wanted to hear, despite my explaining I wanted to know their views. Moreover, children can find it difficult to express their personal beliefs and spirituality

through language, as suggested by Hay and Nye (2006). The nine participants were therefore all interviewed prior to the research about their experiences of RE lessons. This ensured they felt comfortable talking about their spirituality with me. Also, the pilot interviews demonstrated that the pupils would benefit from prompts such as words or pictures (Nesbitt, 2000). Although prompts can affect what the participants say, this limitation was outweighed by their advantage as stimuli, enabling rather than constraining participants' response.

To maximise the credibility of these interviews, 'member checking' took place to ensure that participants thought the findings were plausible and reflected their views (Stake, 1995). Also, although each individual in the case had a different perspective, credibility of conclusions was increased when the pupils commented on similar aspects of spiritual collective worship. Rubin and Rubin (1995, p.225) explain that "the overlapping of narratives between interviewees provides a set of checks." They also add that "comparisons of documentary and interview material allow an additional way to verify information." The participants' perspectives and experiences were therefore verified against two more data sources: the pupils' written response and observations made during the acts of collective worship.

### **Pupils' written responses**

To enable and encourage personal response during spiritual collective worship, there was always an opportunity for a written response to be created. As the documents were created during the research they were a primary source of evidence (Bell, 2005), giving insight into the participants' thoughts, feelings and ideas during the act of collective worship. To remain ethical, the children were given the option of displaying their response for the class to see or folding it and placing it in a bowl to keep it personal. However, it is important to consider the situation in which it was created (Robson, 2011). As others could see their response being created, the pupils may have been discouraged from responding fully.

The responses were analysed separately but were also used as prompts during the interviews to understand participants' reflections in more depth. Where the child was able to fully explain their response in the interview, trustworthiness was given to both forms of data. One limitation was that the written response was optional, meaning the children did not necessarily create a document to analyse or discuss. However, I used a lack of response as data too, ensuring there was an opportunity to question the child about why they did not want to create something on that occasion. In addition, analysing responses that were mainly in

picture form was more difficult, as the connection with the pupils' reflections was more abstract and a higher level of inference needed to be applied (Robson, 2011).

### Log of semi-structured observations

The method of observation was also chosen to triangulate with the participants' comments in interview, to either increase or question the credibility of the data. Observations are useful as they give evidence of participants' actions and responses at the time, providing a useful comparison with interview data where participants' select what they wish to reveal (Walford, 2001).

As I was leading the acts of collective worship, I was unable to make detailed observation notes at the time, or to focus my full attention on observing different children's reactions. No other adults were regularly present in the room to make observations of the participants and video recordings seemed unethical for pupils when experiencing a new form of worship which encouraged personal response. In addition, recordings could have changed their behaviour which may have been indistinguishable from changes due to the spiritual collective worship.

As this research was exploratory, a more unstructured approach was needed to identify behaviours which occurred during acts of collective worship (Simpson & Tuson, 1995). I therefore chose to keep a 'record of collective worship experiences' – a log of the observations I made of the class during the collective worships, recorded after the event. This research method reflected my significant involvement, meaning I could only record my perceptions of the pupils' comments and actions about the worship. An observation schedule was used as a guide to write detailed field notes about the act of collective worship, immediately after it had occurred, reminding me of the order of the collective worship and ensuring my comments were focused on the research questions. It also minimised variation in my perceptions over the four acts of worship, allowing more direct comparisons to be made (Denscombe, 2003). However, as this was an initial study, it also provided room for comments on unexpected events and reactions to be recorded.

However, the observations were not made at the time and so were only as comprehensive as my memory. This was especially limited as I could not leave when I had remembered as much as I was able, as suggested by Taylor and Bogdan (1998). This disadvantage was

increased because I had to concentrate on leading the worship, as well as observing the pupils' responses and actions. My observations were also subjective as I may have noticed responses or behaviours that I was expecting and overlooked other aspects. Nonetheless, as their teacher, I could more easily identify different behaviours presented and interpret their meanings and reactions (Bell, 2005). My presence also kept the setting more natural and so was also less likely to change pupils' behaviour than an unknown researcher.

## Coding

To enable careful analysis, audio recordings of the interviews were made and then transcribed and the observation sheets and pupils products were assembled. I then followed the principles of 'thematic coding analysis' suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) to identify codes inductively, ensuring they were based firmly on the data. However, to analyse whether spiritual collective worship contributed to pupils' spiritual development, I looked for evidence of spiritual experiences and reflection before coding inductively the details that emerged. While this could force the data into particular categories, it was important that evidence for spirituality was linked to the literature.

Once concepts were coded, patterns were gradually identified through making connections – finding contiguity relations (Maxwell and Miller, 2008) – so that themes emerged from the data as far as possible (Evans, 2009). As a subjective researcher, some themes may have been missed or over-emphasised. However, coding was analysed and assessed throughout the process to ensure researcher bias was minimized (Hennick et al., 2011). Additionally, the full transcripts are published Appendix A to enable others to check the findings reflect the voices of the participants.

## *Ethical considerations*

In addition to the ethical decisions made throughout the research design, this research was also conducted within the responsibilities made clear in the *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (BERA, 2004) and according to faculty requirements. At all times, respect for the pupils was maintained. This was particularly important due to the sensitivity required by researching the pupils' diverse, personal and often sacred beliefs (Nesbitt, 2000). I particularly made clear that all their views were valuable and would be represented in the research. To ensure this, full transcripts are published in Appendix A for scrutiny.

Before the research took place, the purpose of study, research design and questions were approved by the head teacher who was also the gate keeper. A letter was sent to parents explaining the nature and purpose of the study, the data that would be collected and how this would be stored and used. This letter offered all parents the opportunity for withdrawing their child. In addition, a further letter was sent to parents of children who were usually withdrawn from collective worship, asking permission for their child to participate in spiritual worship that drew on Christian content. These parents were then telephoned to ensure they had understood the nature of the research and to confirm their consent.

Moreover, children have a right to form their own views and decide if they are willing to participate themselves (based on UN, 1989, Article 12). Therefore I spoke to the children who were usually withdrawn from collective worship to ensure they themselves were willing to participate and made clear they could withdraw at any point if they felt uncomfortable. I also asked the pupils in the case study for permission to interview them and to make an audio recording. I made clear their right to withdraw from any question or the overall research process. To ensure the data was protected, the volunteer transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement and audio recordings will only be stored for one year. In addition, although transcripts of the interviews are included, all names are changed to ensure confidentiality and anonymity



## Overview of the Spiritual Collective Worship Sequence

When designing the acts of spiritual worship I considered two key aspects: the overall structure and the content of each act of worship. Decisions made were based on the aim of helping every pupil develop their own spirituality, enabling children of all faiths and beliefs to participate. Crucially, I also needed to ensure the worship met the statutory requirement of leading ‘broadly Christian’ worship. To do this I ensured that every act of collective worship was based on Christian values (for example, caring for others) and that half of the stories used as stimuli were Biblical. In addition, Christian symbolism was used in the opening and closing (the candle representing the presence of God as Jesus when lit and the Holy Spirit when extinguished). This ensured the liturgy created was not from a specific denomination but remained broadly Christian. By designing the acts of collective worship with these foci in mind, I would then be able to answer my research questions effectively.

### *Creating a community*

In the literature review it was suggested that community helped children develop spiritual understanding (West-Burnham & Huws Jones, 2007). I therefore wanted to create a sense of community for the class and make everyone feel included, while recognizing their different personal beliefs. To try and achieve this, I drew on an example identified by Eaude (2003). He observed an act of worship where everyone in the school chose a pebble to represent them. All of these were then placed together in a bowl as a focal point (with three lit candles) for each collective worship. In spiritual class collective worship, I therefore asked every child to pick a pebble and place it in a bowl with a candle. This was then positioned at the front of the room to provide the pupils with a focus.

### *Opening and closing*

For each act of spiritual collective worship, I wanted to have a clear opening and ending to mark the time of worship clearly, as suggested in the literature. This was particularly important for class collective worship where pupils did not change rooms or teacher. To mark the opening and closing of the worship, I chose to use the same form of imagery – a candle – to link the start and end together. A candle was chosen because it had shown to be effective by White (2000) in marking the reflection time in her class and could also reflect different meanings for those who held different beliefs. For example, for Christians, light is a

symbol of Jesus and so could represent the presence of God to them. However, the candle could also be a symbol of uncertainty as it flickered. Therefore, the candle being lit marked the start of collective worship, but the words spoken were also designed to help the children realise this was a time for their individual reflection (see Table 2).

When closing the worship, the candle was extinguished in order to illustrate the worship was coming to an end – to mark the end of the bounded time and space. However, I wanted to make it clear this did not mean what they had reflected on was not important outside the collective worship. Therefore words were spoken which again could have different meanings for the students (see Table 2). For example, for pupils who were Christian, the smoke could represent the presence of the Holy Spirit remaining with them. For others, seeing the smoke diffuse in the air may have made them consider their ideas being taken into the rest of their life.

### *Stimulus and response*

Within each act of worship, I also wanted to ensure there was a clear stimulus and a time for the pupils to respond personally to this. The main stimulus was a story in order to give the pupils an idea or metaphor to support their spiritual reflection (Erricker & Erricker, 1996). Each story was chosen to reflect one aspect of children's spirituality: how they relate to themselves, others, the world and God or an 'ultimate order of things'. As mentioned, in order to ensure that the worship maintained a 'broadly Christian character', two stimuli were Bible stories and the two others were secular stories but based on Christian concepts like giving to others and caring for the world. Details of these stories can be found in Table 2 and Appendix D.

One of the most important aspects of spiritual collective worship was a time for personal response. I wanted to give a wide range of opportunities for pupils to spiritually reflect and also study their responses. Therefore each act of worship involved three forms of response: a time of wondering, a time of quiet reflection and a written response.

First, a time of wondering was designed from the literature which suggested that wondering encourages pupils to reflect personally and to not think there are particular answers that they were being taught or even forced to believe. Stewart and Berryman (1989, p.30), in the context of the Christian, Godly Play approach, suggest the leader "makes reflection possible

through the use of ‘wondering’ questions”. Thus, by demonstrating that there were no right answers through this form of question, I hoped to ensure the pupils kept a sense of mystery rather than mastery, as promoted by Nye (2007). In addition, the students’ responses could be recorded where possible in the observation notes.

Secondly, there was a time of quiet reflection (either in silence or to music) which Copley (1992, p.78) suggests “allows for individual freedom of choice”, meaning each pupil could reflect personally. However, Bull (1954, p.19) notes that “silence has a real value in worship, but it must be guided – the children should know what they are going to do with it”. Hence, I ensured pupils were always given something to focus or reflect on if they wished.

The final form of response provided was the opportunity to create a written response. This maintained the emphasis on personal response that I was trying to create. It was an opportunity where “each child chooses what he or she wishes to do” (Stewart and Berryman, 1989, p.31) and therefore gave pupils the opportunity to respond to the stimulus individually. It also required students to be creative and respond using a variety of different senses, as encouraged by Parffrey (1997). Additionally, by creating something physically, it enabled me to analyse their ideas and reflections and discuss these in more detail with the pupils.

Table 2: Overview of the spiritual collective worship sequence

Focus of Collective Worship	Opening	Stimulus	Response	Closing
Self - our uniqueness	<p>Light the candle with these words:</p> <p><i>As we come together, we light this candle.</i></p> <p><i>If you are</i></p>	Story of Moses – realising his potential	<p>I wonder questions</p> <p>Look at the uniqueness of our hands</p> <p>Drawing a response.</p>	<p>Ask one child to snuff out the candle.</p> <p><i>As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers and our God spreading out, ready to go with us.</i></p> <p><i>Let us go with hearts filled with love.</i></p>
Others: helping others	<p><i>Christian, you may think the light is like Jesus, shining out everywhere.</i></p> <p><i>If you are a theist, you may think the</i></p>	Story of Alfie and others passing on a hat to those who need it.	<p>I wonder questions</p> <p>Pass something between our hands.</p> <p>Drawing a response</p>	
World: making a difference	<p><i>light symbolises the presence of God in the world.</i></p> <p><i>If you are an agnostic, the</i></p>	Story of the girl throwing starfish back in the sea to save them	<p>I wonder questions</p> <p>Listening to music while looking at the picture.</p> <p>Drawing a response</p>	
God/ultimate meaning: searching for meaning in our lives	<p><i>flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of a God.</i></p> <p><i>If you are an atheist, the light may make you consider what meaning there is in the world.</i></p>	Story of Elijah finding God in the still small voice	<p>I wonder questions</p> <p>Time of silence</p> <p>Drawing a response</p>	

Table 2 shows the themes, structure and different stimuli and responses chosen for spiritual collective worship. More detailed plans can be found in Appendix D.

## Findings

As explained in the research design, codes were identified from across three data sets to answer the research questions. These codes were mainly found inductively to ensure themes fully reflected the data. However, to discover whether spiritual collective worship contributed to pupils' spiritual development, it was important instead to deductively take the themes of 'experience' and 'reflection' from the literature and then identify if and how they were expressed inductively. Themes then emerged from these codes which could be used to help answer the two research questions. The questions, data sets, codes and themes used are represented in Table 3. The findings will be presented by taking the research questions in turn and discussing the themes and data for each.

Table 3: Codes and themes identified from the data

Research Question	Data Source	Codes	Theme	
What do pupils find to be the purposes of spiritual collective worship and do they value them?	Individual interviews	Time to think	Having time and space to think – purpose	
		Marked/bounded		
		Opportunity to pray		
		Record of observations	No other time	Having time and space to think – value
			Focal point	Being able to think for themselves - purpose
			Think for yourself	
	Experience different ideas		Being able to think for themselves - value	
	Work out own beliefs			
	Personal		Being together - purpose	
	Experiencing community			
	Being unique together		Being together - value	
	Think together			
	Learning - purpose	Inclusive	Learning - purpose	
		Learn about ideas/beliefs		
Learn from ideas/beliefs		Learning - value		
Have ideas				
Share ideas				
Does spiritual collective worship contribute to the pupils' spiritual development?	Individual interviews	Feeling a sense of calm or peace	Evidence of spiritual experience	
		Feeling scared or nervous		
		Sensing something numinous		
	Requiring response			
	Record of observations	No reflection	Evidence of spiritual reflection - limited	
		Literal reflection		
		Direct response to stimulus		
	Pupils' written responses	Making connections to understand the past	Evidence of spiritual reflection - relating to their own lives	
		Reconsidering the future		

### *What do pupils find to be the purposes of spiritual collective worship and do they value them?*

In order to consider whether the pupils found the acts of spiritual collective worship purposeful, I studied the data from the individual interviews and my observations. Four key themes emerged with the students' responses and the observation notes both giving evidence for what the pupils found important (the purpose) and why (the value). I will therefore take each of these themes in turn and discuss first the purpose the pupils identified and then whether and how they valued it.

#### *Having time and space to think*

One of the purposes of spiritual collective worship pupils identified was having time and space to think: "We just had our own time and space to think and we don't really have that moment of time in school" (Ollie, agnostic). As children are required to think during the rest of the school day, it suggests this time and space was marked for a particular form of thinking. This distinction was recognised by Daniel (Christian) who explained, "It's just like quiet time, and [it's] not like another, all the other lessons." For two pupils, part of this time was for prayer. Sanjiv (other faith) explained there were times when everyone was thinking and praying together and Alissa (Christian) commented, "It's a good opportunity to, um, do the praying." The children therefore found the time and space of spiritual collective worship enabled them to reflect and, for some who wished, it was a time for prayer.

There were two main ways the students recognized this was a special time and space. First, they commented on how it was quiet and still, which enabled them to focus. Daniel (Christian) remarked, "It's just some quiet time and you get to think to yourself" and Sam (theist) emphasised the importance of the quiet by saying, "They had to be quite quiet [to] let you think." Secondly, the children also found the candle helpful to mark the time. The act of lighting the candle seemed to signal a time to reflect, demonstrated by the comment of a teaching assistant I recorded in my observations: "They all go quiet when you strike the match." The fact the pupils responded to the very process of lighting the candle suggests this moment marked a reflection time. They also found this time significant as they wanted to be involved. My observation notes record several occasions when they enjoyed snuffing out the candle or asked to light it (see appendix B, p.176). Matthew (theist) also commented that he liked the candle when it was lit but "I would like us to do [light] it."

Did the pupils value having time and space to think?

The pupils seemed to value having time and space to think, particularly commenting on how it was an opportunity for reflection they otherwise did not have. Isobel (agnostic-atheist) remarked, “It’s good to have a few minutes just, like, everyone have a minute quiet before they go home, because you might not get any time at home.” Ollie (agnostic) agreed: “You get time to think and we really don’t get that much time to think in maybe a day.” However, some found if this time and space was completely silent, they were less able to reflect and value the opportunity. “Sometimes you think it’s a bit too serious so then you get a bit nervous.” (Sam, theist). Similarly, Olivia (agnostic) found she concentrated on not fidgeting, rather than reflecting (appendix A, p.109). These children still remarked it was good to have time to think, but they perhaps needed a different approach.

While recognising the candle marked the time and space to think, the pupils also valued it as a focus for their reflection. I noted that students “understood refocusing on the candle as a quiet time”, which suggests they used the candle to help them reflect. Yasir (other faith) described how the candle enabled his reflection: “When you start looking at the candle, it kind of makes you think more.” Another pupil also connected his thinking with the candle when he described how he most wanted to keep “the thinking time – like when you’re looking at the candle.” (Sanjiv, other faith). The pupils therefore seemed to value not just having time and space to reflect, but a focus to enable them to do so.

However, not all the pupils appeared to value having this time and space. When asked if they thought it was important to have spiritual collective worship, Matthew (theist) suggested it could be “maybe like once every two weeks” and Ollie (agnostic) thought it was good because it “uses up the time that we have spare.” These comments indicate the pupils did not completely dislike times of collective worship but did not value having time and space above other activities they could be doing.

### *Being able to think for themselves*

A second purpose the pupils identified was an opportunity to think for themselves. This purpose showed the children recognized their active role in the acts of spiritual collective worship, coming up with their own ideas rather than passively receiving them. Sam (theist) explained they were “to sort of give your own thought on... questions.” The difference this

made from their previous experience of collective worship was highlighted by Daniel (Christian) who said, “The other time we were looking at other people’s... and how they believe, and now we’re kind of looking at, like, what we believe.” The pupils therefore identified spiritual collective worship as an opportunity to develop their own beliefs.

The students also accepted that their beliefs would be different from other people’s, but saw this as positive. For example, Yasir (other faith) commented on the variety of viewpoints people would want to develop from the same stimulus: “There’s one key thing and people want to think, kind of, not the same but different.” He also made it clear that even Christian material, which usually led to his withdrawal collective worship, did not affect his ability to participate and think for himself: “I can relate to it in a different way, so it really doesn’t matter what it is.” The pupils’ security in being able to express different opinions, ideas and beliefs was also evident in the many varied responses given to the ‘I wonder’ questions, recorded in the observation notes (appendix B). The pupils therefore thought it purposeful to be able to think for themselves, aware that everyone would have different beliefs and ideas.

Did the pupils value being able to think for themselves?

Yasir’s comment above also demonstrates the value pupils placed on being able to think for themselves, suggesting everyone wanted to think differently. Similarly, Isobel (agnostic-atheist) also expressed the value in working out what she thought. “It’s good to look up on what, what I believe and stuff because I never actually done it before since I’ve been at school.” The pupils’ remarks make it clear they wanted to work out their own ideas and the spiritual collective worship provided an opportunity for this.

In addition, the pupils also recognized the personal nature of the acts of spiritual collective worship and valued sharing their thoughts and ideas only if they wanted to. Sanjiv (other faith) explained how he could think for himself: “You can just keep it in to yourself and nobody’s really saying, ‘Do you have any ideas about this?’” The same personal nature was true for their written responses. I noted in my observations that children made a deliberate decision whether to fold their responses or to display them, showing they consciously thought about whether they wanted to reveal their individual thoughts to others (appendix B, p.178). Olivia (agnostic) was also very clear about wanting to keep her ideas and feelings personal: “I don’t really like having mine to show in case anybody does understand what the pictures are meant to mean.”



### *Being together*

A third purpose the pupils identified was being together. Similarly to 'having time and space to think', the children recognised that spiritual collective worship provided a different way to be together from usual. Ollie (agnostic) commented, "[we] spend time, like, together as a class," and Daniel (Christian) said, "It's just a time where you can just spend time as a class and you get to be together... I think it's good to be a class and share times like that." To make these comments indicates they sensed this was a different way of being a class and perhaps shows the pupils were experiencing a sense of community. Sanjiv (other faith) revealed how this sense of community had helped him. "I don't feel like I'm the only one who's actually being silent because if everybody's being silent then we all know that... we're all thinking and praying." This suggests that even though the pupils were 'thinking for themselves', they still felt together from sharing this experience.

Other participants recognised the purpose of bringing unique individuals together to share in the spiritual worship, a concept often explained through the pebbles as a metaphor. Sanjiv (other faith) explained, "It's nice to see what one, what different pebbles are that are there, and which one everybody chose, and then put them together." Similarly Daniel (Christian) said, "It's kind of like your pebble that you picked and not anyone else's, so it's good... I really enjoyed having a look at different ones what my friends liked." For both these pupils the pebbles seemed to represent the importance of being unique – like the pebble they chose – but together with others. In addition, I noted the pupils ensured in the second session that those who had been absent picked a pebble to represent them.

### Did the pupils value being together?

The pupils seemed to value two aspects of being together. First, they explained it felt better to think together because it helped them reflect. Yasir (other faith) said, "When you're together, it feels more better... we can all think together." Adding to this he explained, "If you were like lonely and thinking, you just feel lonely and you don't think about that much, but when you've got other people around that boosts up your confidence about thinking." In addition, Isobel (agnostic-atheist), using the metaphor of a 'blob' that represented her, suggested being with others helped her to think of how she related to others, an aspect of spirituality. "When I look down sometimes, um, I just think about me and when I look up, I think about other people and me at the same time, and how we relate." However, for some pupils the reason

they valued being together was less clear. “I just like being together with friends a lot.” (Olivia, agnostic). While Olivia may have found it hard to explain a different way of being with friends, she may also have just felt spiritual collective worship was a time to have fun with friends.

Secondly, the pupils valued that spiritual collective worship was inclusive and those of all faiths could take part. This was particularly strongly felt by two pupils of other faiths, who were usually withdrawn from whole-school, Christian assemblies. “It’s good to think together, instead of someone else going in assembly, and if you’re out of assembly then you don’t really.” (Yasir). Sanjiv responded similarly: “I don’t go to assemblies and normally at assemblies, when it’s time – when they pray – that’s when they kind of think about things.” Both these remarks suggest the pupils feel they miss out on the opportunity to reflect when withdrawn from Christian worship and so valued the time they spent thinking with others in spiritual collective worship. Additionally, other pupils valued inclusivity too: “[Whole-school worship] is a bit unfair on the people which are different religions... because they can’t join in.” (Sam, theist).

However, spiritual collective worship still did not manage to be fully inclusive. In my observation notes I commented that Matthew (theist) “possibly started to react to the religious story”. In interview he also commented on not believing religious ideas about God: “In stories about God, like, there’s impossible things. That’s why mostly I don’t believe it.” Unlike the children of other faiths who discussed thinking about Bible stories in their own way, Matthew appeared to be put off when Christian stories were used and this perhaps made him feel excluded.

### *Learning*

The final purpose pupils identified was learning, firstly *about* stories or religions. Daniel (Christian) found he learned about other religions, saying, “In class assembly you get to learn more about different beliefs.” Yasir also commented on how he learned about different religions with his remark, “I learnt quite a lot about different people and what they done, even though it was Christian and Jews.” Interestingly, he later commented this learning increased his knowledge but probably not his faith, showing that learning about religions was a clear purpose for him.

However, the students noticed they could also learn *from* other people's ideas in order to think about their own. This was evident in one pupil's response, "You can learn about other people and... it can give you something to think about." (Isobel, agnostic-atheist). This quote expresses how the students thought they could use other people's ideas to help develop their own. For Olivia (agnostic), the learning was focused more on moral development; that they could learn ideas about how to live from spiritual collective worship because "each one of them has a moral." These comments show spiritual collective worship was not just an opportunity for the students to receive information but to use the stories or the responses of others to reflect on their own lives.

### Did the pupils value learning in spiritual collective worship?

The pupils valued two aspects of learning: having ideas and sharing these ideas with one another. As mentioned earlier, they thought it was important to be able to think for themselves and part of the learning purpose was to gather more ideas to help them do this. For example, Sam (theist) explained that he liked having ideas in the spiritual collective worship as "you wouldn't get anywhere in life without them."

The pupils also particularly valued sharing their ideas to learn from each other. In interview, some explained they shared their ideas: "We can speak to each other and we can share our thoughts with everyone." (Ollie, agnostic). However, others focused on how sharing ideas helped them develop their own: "Because when they put their hand up, then you can relate to what you think" (Yasir, other faith). Sharing ideas was also evident in my observations where I noted a conversation between Sanjiv and Ollie that impacted on Ollie's ideas: "Ollie thought he'd like to save his PS3 (it was important to him). Sanjiv responded, 'What about the Earth?' Ollie thought about this and then added a drawing of the world to his written response." (Figure 2 shows the Earth in his written response). In this case, the sharing of ideas between the two boys clearly influenced Ollie to think more widely. Pupils therefore valued discussing their ideas because this did then influence what they thought as individuals.



Figure 2: A written response showing that ideas were shared. Ollie’s response from the third act of spiritual collective worship shows some of things he wished to save. In my observations I noted his original response was of his Playstation3 but a conversation with Sanjiv made him then draw the Earth (middle left), and add his friends and family too.

### ***Does spiritual collective worship contribute to pupils’ spiritual development?***

As mentioned, to identify evidence of children’s spiritual development, it was important to ensure my findings were firmly embedded in the literature. I therefore deductively looked for evidence of children’s spiritual experience (moments of heightened awareness) and spiritual reflection (considering the meaning of experiences and attempts to understand their place in the world). However, I then inductively analysed all three data sets for themes that related to these areas. I also remained aware that spirituality can be very difficult to express and so may have been described through metaphor (Erricker & Erricker, 1996).

### ***Evidence of spiritual experience***

#### **Feeling a sense of calm or peace**

One theme about spiritual experience that emerged from the data was pupils commenting, throughout the interviews, on feeling calm or peaceful. For example, Alissa (Christian) observed the acts of spiritual collective worship helped her “to relax and be calm.” For Olivia (agnostic), spiritual collective worship gave her “time to just sort of calm down.” In my observation notes on the second collective worship, I also commented that four children had

their heads on the desks but I said nothing, reflecting that “if space or peace was important, I thought it was ok to leave them.” This suggests that there was an atmosphere during the act of worship which was enabling pupils to respond personally to the sense of peace they felt.

Others found they had strong positive feelings during the spiritual collective worship, which again indicates they felt calm or settled to enjoy it. Matthew (theist), when choosing a blob at the top of the tree to represent himself, explained, “Sometimes I do feel like the top of the world while I’m doing it.” This seems a very strong positive response, perhaps over-exaggerated if he thought it would please me to hear it. However, it suggests he found himself feeling good during some of the acts of collective worship, even though he could not explain why.

Not all the pupils experienced this calm all the time though. Olivia (agnostic) explained that it was only as she began to know what to expect, she felt more settled and positive (appendix A, p.105). Alissa (Christian) also seemed to find her familiarity of the consistent structure gradually helped her to relax: “When the assembly starts and when the music’s on, it gives me a chance to rely on what I think’s going to happen.” In addition, for some pupils, silence was a difficult experience as they wanted to move about (Matthew, theist), found it scary (Olivia, agnostic) or became nervous (Sam, theist).

### Sensing something numinous

A second theme indicating pupils had some form of spiritual experience is evidence of sensing something numinous; they seemed to respond powerfully to something abstract or other-worldly. These were important moments which had meaning for the individual, but were often difficult to express. I have therefore tried to identify the significance of what they said through the language, images and metaphor used.

The first example of sensing the numinous comes from Yasir (other faith) who commented about how he had experienced the pebbles and candle.

*Yasir:* It makes me think about when you put the pebbles on, like, near, around the candle... It makes me feel that they are us, the pebbles, and we’re, like, looking at the candle...

*Researcher:* ... What would the candle be, if the pebbles are us?

*Yasir:* Something special maybe.

Yasir seemed to use the candle and pebbles as a metaphor to explain what he experienced during spiritual collective worship. He appears to have felt that everyone was focused on the same special thing. We cannot know exactly what the candle represented to Yasir, perhaps he did not know either, but it suggests he sensed something numinous.

A second example comes from Daniel (Christian) who seemed to experience something numinous when the candle was extinguished.

Because you're looking at the light – at the flickering of the candle – and then when you put it out it's like... even though you can't see the flickering light any more, it's still there. The smoke is like the flickering light.

Daniel seems to have drawn on the language and imagery I used to make meaning out of his experience. Again, what the light and smoke represented for Daniel remains unclear. However it certainly suggests he experienced something numinous, which remained even after the worship finished.

Finally, for some pupils, while the experience was ineffable, they understood their sense of something numinous as God. Olivia (agnostic) related imagery from a recent prayer space to her understanding of the pebbles, explaining how these represented her sins and God.

It reminded me of that Easter thing that St [X] set up when you had to drop a pebble into the thing, and like, hoping it's a sin so that God could get rid of it. So, um, I thought about that and just dropped it in thinking that maybe the thing would disappear.”

Although not completely clear, Olivia's comment suggests she felt her sins could be taken away, perhaps by God.

Another example of sensing something numinous as God comes from Ollie (agnostic) who described what he had experienced when participating in spiritual collective worship.

It kind of made me believe in God more, because... all the good and bad things made me think more, like, who would do that. Like, God would do it when we'd been, like, good and nice and when bad things happen it's usually when we've been bad and things.

This comment suggests Ollie experienced something numinous which he understood to be God, shown by his reflection and sense God was present in good things. Perhaps Ollie said

this as he thought I wished to hear he believed in God more. However, it seems a very personal thought and an in-depth explanation to construct, suggesting it was a sincere experience.

All these comments point towards many of the students sensing something numinous, although it is impossible to fully understand exactly what they experienced, due to the ineffable quality of what they were describing. For some, the experience seemed to remain a mystery. Others understood these experiences to be God.

### Requiring response

The final theme suggesting pupils had a form of spiritual experience is the need they felt to respond. Several pupils remarked on feeling able or wanting to express their feelings during spiritual collective worship. For example, Olivia (agnostic) commented, “It’s nice because when you express your feelings, you feel as if there’s no one there except from you.” This comment suggests something about the worship made her want to express particular feelings but in a personal way.

Personal responses also seemed to occur when the pupils experienced something challenging. For example, Isobel (agnostic-atheist) made two separate comments but that seemed to relate a challenging feeling with needing to respond. Isobel commented she only liked spiritual collective worship a little bit because “there’s weird things happening, some things do get a bit worrying half way through because my thoughts quickly change.” Seemingly connected to this, Isobel also discussed her experience of drawing: “Sometimes it’s hard to say things and it’s good to draw it and let it out.” Through discussion with me, she reflected she could let her feelings go inside whatever she was drawing and that she could then fold the drawing up and let the feelings go (see appendix A, p.97 for the full transcript). This explanation suggests Isobel did have some form of experience she wanted to understand and respond to.

Interestingly, the need to respond to an experience did not always seem to be voluntary. In my observations, I particularly noted the response of Matthew (theist) to the stimulus of being unique and looking at the lines on our hands to reflect on this.

All engaged except Matthew who did not look at his hands and crossed his arms... He [then] didn’t create anything. He said he didn’t want to. When I asked why, he said he didn’t think there was

anything that made him special. I asked if there was anything he wanted to achieve and he said no. I said he had to sit quietly and listen. I later saw him looking at the lines on his hands.

This observation suggests Matthew's experience was difficult so he hadn't wanted to respond. However, the notes reveal he was not able to sustain this; eventually his experience compelled him to respond.

Finally, some of the pupils' need to respond was directed towards the transcendent. Two pupils commented on how they had prayed to God during spiritual collective worship, perhaps responding to an experience they had felt. Additionally Alissa (Christian) chose to write a prayer as a written response (Figure 3): "Dear God, thank you for creating the world and creating all the great things we have. Amen." This prayer suggests she had an experience of wonder about the world and felt the need to respond to God with thanks.

It seems therefore there were moments when pupils felt a need to respond, although they found different ways to do so. Sometimes their response was voluntary, other times it seemed involuntary. Additionally, for some pupils, the response was to express feelings or let something go, for others it was directed towards God.



Figure 3: Responding in prayer. Alissa's written response from the third act of spiritual collective worship, reflecting on caring for the world shows the prayer she wrote: "Dear God, thank you for creating the world and creating all the great things we have. Amen."



## *Evidence of spiritual reflection*

### Relating to their own lives

In spiritual collective worship, a stimulus relating to one of the four strands of spirituality was used. This means the pupils naturally related to themselves, others, the world and the ultimate order of things. However different themes emerged from the data. Pupils' spiritual reflection was often based on relating a story, idea or experience to their own life, either making connections to understand their past, or reconsidering their future.

### *Making connections to understand their past*

The first way pupils reflected spiritually was by making sense of their past by connecting the stimulus to ideas or events they had experienced, a process described by Sam (theist). "They sort of helped me to revise some things but I don't think they actually taught me anything. They just sort of, like, made me look back." Sam's explanation demonstrates the importance of spiritual collective worship was not the stimulus itself but how it helped him to reflect on his own past and experiences.

This process of using the stimulus to reflect on the past was evident from the interviews and written responses. Olivia (agnostic) discussed how she had related to God through connecting Elijah's search for God with her own (appendix A, p.111-112). Ollie (agnostic) created a response based on a theme of 'giving to others,' that showed a Playstation3 and a pizza. When asked to explain this, he said his drawing was of a past event when he had shared a pizza with his brother and let him win a Playstation3 game (Figure 4 and appendix A, p.148). Ollie had therefore been reflecting on how he had given to others in his own life.

A final example is Alissa's (Christian) written response (Figure 5). She created some flowers and explained her reflection. "I've created flowers... someone's given me them and then I've given them to my grandma when she was poorly." Alissa therefore connected the idea of giving to past events, reflecting on the value of both receiving and giving. She also responded further as I noted she gave me some tissue paper flowers at the end of the collective worship saying, "I made these for you." Her reflection therefore resulted in her wanting to repeat her giving from the past, which links to the next theme.



Figure 4: Reflecting on a past event: sharing and giving. Ollie's written response from the second act of spiritual collective worship shows a Playstation3 and a pizza which Ollie explained was a time when he had shared a pizza with his brother and allowed him to win a game.



Figure 5: Reflecting on the past: giving and receiving. Alissa's response from the second spiritual collective worship shows her reflections on receiving flowers herself and giving flowers to her grandma when she was ill.

### *Reconsidering their future*

Pupils also seemed to reflect spiritually by using the stimulus to reconsider their future. For example, Isobel (agnostic-atheist) explained, "I could... see what other people have been doing and compare them with me and see if I could do them as well." For Isobel, the stimulus was an opportunity for her to reflect on her actions in the future. The same reflection was shown by Olivia (agnostic). She remarked, "I just like listening to how people can be really helpful and kind sometimes. So then it makes me want to be, like, 'Oh, I want to do that!'"

A similar form of reflection was also evident in the written responses. In response to considering her individuality, Isobel (agnostic-atheist) created a hand with the words: “to be a good friend”. In response to ‘caring for the world’, she wrote that she wanted to help wildlife and children who were ill (Figure 6). For both these examples, Isobel was using the stimulus to reflect on what she wanted to do or be in the future. Similarly, Sanjiv (when recounting the starfish story) explained the girl had kept throwing starfish back into the sea to save them and so reflected that he should not give up (appendix A, p.91).



Figure 6: Considering a personal future. Two written responses by Isobel, from the first act of collective worship, reflecting on her uniqueness (left) and the third worship, reflecting on caring for the world (right). It shows Isobel’s reflections on how she wants to be in the future.

However, some pupils’ reflections about their future were a general hope rather than considering a personal action. For example, when reflecting on their search for meaning, Olivia (agnostic) drew the world peace sign and Alissa (Christian) wrote the words: “Peace is what I’m looking for.” Matthew (theist), when responding to caring for the world, wanted “everyone to be happy, for animals to be safe in the world” (Figures 7, 8 and 9). These hopes did not seem to be directed towards anything or anyone in particular, but show the pupils were reflecting on the future.



Figure 7: Hope for the world. Olivia's written response from the fourth act of spiritual collective worship shows a world and the world peace symbol, suggesting she reflected on a desire for peace.



Figure 8: A desire for peace. The figure shows two views (due to a flap) of Alissa's written response from the fourth spiritual collective worship, reflecting on searching for ultimate meaning. It shows that Alissa hoped for finding peace – perhaps either in her own life or the world.



Figure 9: Hopes for the future. Matthew's written response from the third act of spiritual collective worship shows what he wanted for the world: "For everyone to be happy. For animals to be safe in the world."

## No or literal reflection

However, not all the pupils seemed to spiritually reflect with some children choosing not to respond or being very literal in their understanding. As mentioned above, Matthew (theist) chose not to respond in written form but seemed to then reflect in a different way. In my observation notes I also recorded instances where two or three pupils were staring out of the window, perhaps uninterested and so not responding to the worship (appendix B, p.180). These pupils may have been reflecting internally, but it seems there were times when spiritual collective worship did not promote reflection.

Moreover, sometimes students responded only directly to the story stimulus. For example, many pupils seemed uncertain about searching for God or things of ultimate worth and so responded by simply drawing part of the story (Figure 10). The students may have been using the story as a metaphor with which to understand their own lives. For example, Ollie's (agnostic) written response showed his own reflection on searching, giving Elijah a torch to see and a knife to protect him. However, there is evidence some pupils only reflected on the story. Sam (theist) spoke about how hearing the story of the girl throwing starfish back into the ocean had made him feel better as the girl was doing a good thing. Yet when asked if it made him think about his own life, he replied, "Not really." (see appendix A, p.78 for full account). This suggests not all the pupils always reflected on the stimulus in terms of their own lives.



Figure 10: Responding directly to the story. These pictures are two pupils' responses from the fourth act of spiritual collective worship, reflecting on searching for ultimate meaning. Both are more direct responses from the story. Sanjiv's (left) shows Elijah in a cave. Ollie's (right) shows a further reflection that, to search, a torch is needed to show the way and a knife to give protection when scared.

Finally, some pupils occasionally seemed to respond with a very literal response. For example, instead of considering a search for God or for ‘an ultimate order of things’, several pupils could only understand the idea of searching for a physical object. For example, I noted this conversation with Ollie (agnostic):

Ollie: “I’m searching for a game I’ve lost.”

Researcher: “What about a different sort of search?”

Ollie: “I’m not sure what different sort of search there is.”

Ollie explained in interview, “We did something that we were searching for. I didn’t really get what it meant.” Another pupil (Sam, theist) also became confused by the idea of searching for meaning, shown by his written response where he drew physical things in his life he was searching for, with the explanation, “I’m trying to find my mp4 player because my mum hid it from me” (Figure 11).



Figure 11: A literal response. Sam’s written response from the fourth act of spiritual collective worship, reflecting on searching for ultimate meaning, shows a literal reflection on searching, wanting to find his MP4 player. His reflection states: “it’s in a cupboard because my mum hid it there.”

These examples illustrate that sometimes a few pupils could only respond literally to an abstract stimulus. It suggests they did not relate easily to the ideas or story in the spiritual collective worship and therefore found it hard to reflect on them. This indicates some pupils were not always able to spiritually reflect, either through choice or through a literal response to the stimulus. However, each child responded in connection to their own lives at least once during the sequence of collective worships, suggesting every pupil undertook some level of spiritual reflection.

## Discussion

To consider the implications of taking a spiritual approach to collective worship, I will first discuss the purposes pupils identified and how these relate to aims identified in the literature. I will then consider pupils' perception of the value of these purposes and of spiritual collective worship as a whole. Next I will consider whether collective worship contributed to pupils' spiritual development. Finally, I will reflect on the implications of taking a spiritual approach to collective worship, particularly considering if it was possible to achieve both social and spiritual benefits for all children.

Throughout the discussion it is important to remember this research was a small-scale case study of nine students, based on their experience of four spiritual collective worships. The conclusions made are therefore specific to this case and not widely generalisable, yet remain valuable through their 'relatability' (Bassey, 1981) and as an indicator of possible wider trends.

### *What do pupils find to be the purposes of spiritual collective worship and do they value them?*

The findings show pupils identified four key purposes of spiritual collective worship which were similar to those identified in the literature. First, they recognised and valued a social purpose of being together (Cheetham, 2004), particularly noting that no one was left out for religious reasons. Yasir's (other faith) comment demonstrates the difference he felt between participating in spiritual collective worship and being withdrawn from whole-school, Christian assemblies: "It's good to think together, instead of someone else going in assembly... If you're out of assembly then you don't really [think]." This remark shows the value he (and others) placed on a social purpose of gathering together for reflection.

Secondly, the students identified a learning purpose, corresponding to the educational and moral aims identified in the literature (Cheetham, 2004; Gill, 2004). They discussed how they learnt about other religions and ideas. For example Isobel (agnostic-atheist) said, "You can learn about other people." They also recognised there was a moral or key thing to think about: "It seems each one of them has a moral." (Olivia, agnostic). The pupils seemed to value this learning, with Sam (theist) mentioning the importance of having ideas. Others also commented on the benefit of sharing ideas to influence their own, demonstrated through the

observed conversation between Sanjiv and Ollie about saving the Earth. However, it is important to recognise that, because I taught the pupils, they may have wanted to say they learnt something and over-emphasised this purpose.

Finally, the purposes of ‘having time and space to think’ alongside ‘being able to think for themselves’ were most different from the literature. However, these purposes seem to correspond with a spiritual aim, with pupils valuing a marked, bounded time for reflection. For example, Yasir (other faith) explained how the candle helped him reflect: “When you start looking at the candle, it kind of makes you think more.” This is similar to Gill’s (2000, p.115) finding that collective worship was an opportunity for reflection with one pupil saying it could help them “to see things in a new light.” The pupils particularly valued the time as they felt they did not have another opportunity to reflect: “We really don’t get that much time to think in maybe a day.” (Ollie, agnostic). Whether this opportunity led to a spiritual aim being accomplished will be considered in the next section.

There is therefore evidence that pupils found spiritual collective worship purposeful and valuable. However, two boys indicated they still did not find spiritual collective worship was very important, similarly to non-religious boys in my previous study (Rutherford, 2011). In interview, both Matthew (theist) and Ollie (agnostic) commented on aspects they had liked. Nevertheless, when asked whether it should continue, Matthew suggested that they could be “maybe like once every two weeks.” Even more significantly, Ollie commented that collective worship “uses up the time that we have spare.” For these two pupils it seems there was still uncertainty of the overall value of spiritual collective worship, especially when compared to learning other subjects in school. However, as they were also able to identify aspects they liked, it suggests they still found spiritual collective worship to have some purpose and value.

### ***Does spiritual collective worship contribute to pupils’ spiritual development?***

The literature suggested spirituality is the combination of children’s spiritual experiences and their spiritual reflection, helping children develop their understanding of their place in the world through different relationships. As spirituality is very difficult to identify, I used a deductive coding system, looking for evidence for spiritual experiences and reflection. This means I may have skewed the data to fit these categories. However, as the categories were



very wide, I remained open to inductively identify if these themes were present and what form they took.

First, some pupils seemed to spiritually experience feelings of calm or peace while others appeared to sense something numinous. The latter was expressed as either something important to focus on (Yasir, other faith), a sense of a presence (Daniel, Christian) or an experience understood by the pupil to be God (Ollie, agnostic). In addition, pupils also seemed to need to respond to some experiences, like Isobel (agnostic-atheist) who expressed the need to let her emotions go through her drawn reflections. Spiritual experiences are often based on abstract feelings, thoughts or emotions, which are hard to describe so I cannot be certain whether what the pupils described were spiritual experiences. Furthermore, I had to rely more on the interview data as internal experiences themselves cannot be observed and the written responses required high levels of inference. However, there is evidence from their interviews that they did experience some forms of 'heightened awareness' (Hay & Nye, 2006).

In addition, there is evidence pupils reflected spiritually by relating the stimulus to their own lives. This is similar to how McCreery (1996) found pupils were best able to express and understand their spirituality through stories. Many pupils connected the stimulus to an event or idea from their past to understand it differently. For example, Olivia (agnostic) reflected on her own search for God, considering how Elijah did not give up on his. Several pupils also drew on the stories to think about who they wanted to be and what they wanted to do in the future. Considering concepts in terms of their own lives showed they were reflecting on their place in the world. By doing this relationally, they were developing their spirituality. As Isobel (agnostic-atheist) explained, "I think about other people and me at the same time, and how we relate."

However, there is also evidence that sometimes pupils were unable to reflect spiritually as they did not respond to the stimulus or did so literally. For example, Sam (theist) focused on searching for something he had lost rather than something ultimate. Occasionally I also observed the pupils seemingly disengaged, which would also have prevented them from reflecting. There is therefore uncertainty about whether the acts of spiritual collective worship promoted all children's spiritual development, due to the ineffable nature of spirituality and evidence of some limited responses. In addition, the written responses were

difficult to analyse in isolation, especially as they were often rushed due to time constraints. As mentioned, observations too could only give limited insight into pupils' spiritual responses, especially as I could not note them contemporaneously. Yet, there is still evidence from the different data sources that pupils with different beliefs drew on the stimuli and their own experiences to reflect spiritually on their lives.

Overall, the extent to which spiritual collective worship contributed to pupils' spiritual development is not certain due to limited evidence to triangulate with the interview data and the ineffable nature of spirituality. However, there is still some evidence to suggest spiritual collective worship did help nurture pupils' spiritual experiences and reflection, and thus their spiritual development.

### *What are the implications of taking a spiritual approach to class collective worship?*

From the literature and my own experience, reconciling a social aim of gathering a whole community together with the religious legal requirement is the most difficult aspect of leading collective worship. I attempted to resolve these issues through focusing on nurturing pupils' spiritual development through spiritual collective worship. The key implication of spiritual collective worship is therefore whether social and spiritual aims were achieved.

As I have discussed, there is evidence spiritual collective worship contributed to pupils' spiritual development and that pupils identified a social aim of being together. These two aims were perhaps achieved from pupils recognising they could think for themselves and participate by responding according to their own beliefs. This contrasts with Gill's (2004) finding that some pupils felt collective worship tried to make them all think the same. The difference in how pupils perceived the inclusivity of spiritual collective worship from previous collective worship experiences is summed up by Daniel (Christian). "The other time we were looking at other people's [beliefs], and now we're kind of looking at, like, what we believe."

In addition, the ability of spiritual collective worship to achieve a social and spiritual aim was increased because all pupils usually withdrawn from Christian collective worship were allowed to join in. Those interviewed also spoke clearly about how they were able to participate. Yasir (other faith) commented on how he could reflect even when Christian material was used: "I can relate to it in a different way." He also explained that he could take

Christian stories and “compare it to my Prophet or think calm and peaceful.” Sanjiv (other faith) felt, when the class was silent, they were “all thinking and praying.” For him to think this indicates he was able to pray during the spiritual collective worship. Only Matthew (theist) appeared to sometimes find it difficult to participate, shown by my observation that he seemed to “react against the Christian story” and did not want to respond to it.

More importantly, the pupils appeared not to find the spiritual and social aims were completely separate purposes. Instead their spiritual development was significantly linked to their experience of community, as suggested by West-Burnham and Huws Jones (2007). The pupils seemed to really value being together and commented that other people’s ideas, and therefore their differences, actually helped them to reflect and develop. The pupils were observed sharing their ideas and Yasir (other faith) said, “When you’re together it feels more better... we can all think together.” Therefore it seems that, despite planning spiritual collective worship to accomplish separate social and spiritual aims, when brought together, both were achieved more fully.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

As demonstrated through the discussion, spiritual collective worship seems to have been effective in three main ways. First, the children valued being together, with everyone able to take part. Secondly, the sense of community they experienced seems to have supported them in thinking for themselves, contrasting with Gill (2004) where a pupil felt they were made to think the same. Thirdly, by thinking for themselves and experiencing a clearly marked time and space for worship, the pupils appeared to recognise and value a spiritual aim. Although the contribution made to children's spiritual development is difficult to fully identify and analyse, evidence of feelings of calm and peace, sensing something numinous and needing to respond indicate spiritual experiences. Spiritual reflection appeared to take the form of relating ideas and experiences to their past and future lives. There was also evidence some pupils occasionally chose not to respond or found it hard to reflect on their own lives. However, across all four spiritual collective worships, each child seemed to respond in some way.

Overall spiritual collective worship was an inclusive form of collective worship, therefore meeting a social aim of gathering all pupils together. In addition, it enabled children to think for themselves and reflect on their own beliefs, which indicates it met a spiritual aim. This is supported by evidence suggesting spiritual collective worship nurtured pupils' spiritual experiences and reflection, contributing to pupils' spiritual development. Importantly, achieving social and spiritual aims was still possible whilst keeping the legal requirement of leading 'broadly Christian' worship. Spiritual collective worship was also able to work within a church school context through use of Christian based liturgy, imagery, values and stories. It therefore seems an effective form of class collective worship to employ in future.

### *Implications for my own practice*

These conclusions mean I feel comfortable in continuing to use this approach to lead class collective worship. For me, the key difference seems to have been to make clear to pupils that they were active participants in spiritual collective worship and expected to have different beliefs. The opening and ending indicated how they could understand the nature of the worship differently and wondering questions encouraged pupils to respond personally, sharing their different ideas. Although Matthew (theist) remained unconvinced he could believe or take ideas from Christian stories, all the other pupils in the case – including those

of different faiths – were able to think about them in their own way. In my future practice I therefore want to ensure pupils are aware of different forms of belief and know, in spiritual collective worship, they can draw on their own ideas to develop their spirituality.

The structure of spiritual collective worship also seems to have been effective, although I would perhaps use silence less often, or make it clear to pupils not to be inhibited by worrying about moving or making a sound. However, to maintain effective spiritual collective worship over a longer period of time, I will need to carefully plan the themes of a series of acts of worship carefully. Otherwise I may find spiritual collective worship becomes repetitive and contributes less to children's spiritual development. It will also be crucial to continue finding good stories and stimuli because when the pupils were less sure about the story of Elijah searching for God, their reflections remained more literal. Finally, I recognise that I need to choose the content of each act of worship responsibly, giving attention to the exact values each spiritual collective worship is based on. This consideration will increase if I teach in a non-church school, as discussed below.

### *Implications for the future of school collective worship*

This research suggests it is possible to accomplish both social and spiritual aims for collective worship, whilst upholding the law. It also gives an indication of how times of 'spiritual reflection', recently recommended by Rt Rev John Pritchard to replace collective worship in non-church schools, could be conceived (Bingham, 2014). However, while this research gives some insight into how spiritual collective worship can be designed and its effect on pupils, it only studied the responses of nine pupils and therefore is not widely generalisable (Thomas, 2011). More research is needed to build a greater awareness of different forms of spiritual worship and their effectiveness in different contexts.

As the research was based on a short four-week period, spiritual collective worship may have held novelty value for pupils. As more time and effort could be put into planning just four spiritual collective worships, these acts may also have been more effective than they would remain over time. More research is therefore needed to assess the impact of spiritual collective worship over a longer period. Furthermore, the research was based in a class setting with a year 5 age group. To study the wider implications of spiritual collective worship, it is important to apply it to classes of different ages and to whole school worship. Moreover, the church-school context may have affected the openness of parents and pupils to

spiritual collective worship and researching my own class may have affected pupils' responses. Studying the impact of spiritual collective worship in a variety of schools is therefore important to continue considering the implications of this form of worship. The views of parents and different faith communities should also be considered.

Finally, when applied to different schools, it will be important once more to consider the values spiritual collective worship is based on. As mentioned previously, the current law and the church school context I was working in, meant I based the worship on Christian values. However, this may not be appropriate for non-church schools. Perhaps a set of agreed values could be used; however Smith and Smith's (2013) study suggested schools did not follow a set of values to plan their worship, relying instead on virtues. While virtues or values chosen by the school may be a way forward, given the recent 'Trojan Horse' investigation and the possibility for a small group of people to negatively influence the values underpinning a school community, it seems there are still questions about how the content of collective worship is decided. How can society ensure schools and leaders of collective worship draw on values which are acceptable, relevant and coherent? How can I ensure I select appropriate content when leading class collective worship, given my own Christian beliefs and values? These are questions which were beyond the scope of this study but it is vital these issues are reflected on in future.

Yet, perhaps this research does indicate a way forward in this difficult area too. Whilst the discussion about which values worship is based on remains important, possibly more crucial is how they are responded to. If pupils are encouraged to think about ideas and their beliefs in their own way, and share these ideas with each other, they will be able to come to their own conclusions about the values and beliefs included, both personally and as a community. Therefore, by enabling pupils to reflect on their own ideas and develop their own spirituality, but doing this as part of a community, collective worship may still have a very important place in schools.

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## Appendix A: Interview Transcripts (Coded)

*Interview 1: Sam (Theist)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: - different things recently but if I start we're just going to warm up a little bit because I need to warm up as well. So where had you got to in lessons? Were you still doing the register?

P: Yeah

R: Yeah - And they were cleaning the board. Crazy. And what did you have for breakfast this morning?

P: Mmm. Toast and Jam.

R: What sort of jam?

P: Strawberry

R: Good choice. I had rice crispies this morning. Lovely. So hopefully we're warmed up a little bit. So, my first question is that we've had some different class assemblies over the last 4 weeks. Have you noticed anything about them?

P: Errr. They're more, like, aimed at different religions

**Comment [E1]:** Inclusive

R: Why do you think that? Can you tell me a bit more?

P: Because it's a bit unfair on the people which are different religions, so

**Comment [E2]:** Inclusive

R: why would it be unfair?

P: Because they can't join in

**Comment [E3]:** Inclusive

R: And do you think it's important that they can join in?

P: Yeah

R: And how do you think the assemblies that we've had have been for more religions?

Very sort of open

**Comment [E4]:** Inclusive

Can you tell me a bit more about that?

P: Like, it's a bit more...I can't really - it's a bit hard to explain.

R: It is isn't it? Are there any parts that make you feel that it's a bit more open?

P: Just like you can write your own ideas

**Comment [E5]:** Time to think

R: So that's one thing that means it's more open. Thank you Sam, that's really interesting. So, you've actually picked up on my next question - is there anything that's been different. You've said

a couple of those things already. Is there anything else you think that's been different?

P: It's that in normal class assembly you don't get to do this type of stuff. In the other ones that we used to have we just used to sit there and listen to a story or something like that.

**Comment [E6]:** Think for yourself

R: Yeah. Listen to a story or maybe look at a picture. So, is it that you like the creating bit at the end?

P: Yeah

R: Do you think that's the only bit that's different? Is having that bit at the end?

P: Mostly

R: Mostly, ok thank you. So, what I've done is I've picked out some words about some of the things that have been part of the class assemblies, or that you might have picked out. So there's lots and lots of words here. So, I was wondering, could you just pick one that describes your favourite part? I think that's all of them. So you can take some time and then I'd like you to pick one of them you think is maybe your favourite part of the assembly and explain why you've chosen that word.

P: This one.

R: Can you explain which one you've chosen and why?

P: Well "Ideas" because...because it's very important and that - you wouldn't get anywhere in life without them.

**Comment [E7]:** Have ideas

R: So why are ideas something - why were they an important part of the assemblies?

P: To sort of give your own thought on - on like questions and stuff like that

**Comment [E8]:** Think for yourself

R: To give your - yeah - so you were able to think of your own ideas

**Comment [E9]:** Think for yourself

P: Yeah

R: And is there something that's maybe your least favourite? Something that maybe describes... (Pause) Having a good look round. What's going on in your head? (Pause) So you've picked "silence". Why is that your least favourite?

P: Because, sometimes you think it's a bit too serious. So then you get a bit nervous.

**Comment [E10]:** Feeling scared or nervous

R: Okay. So that makes it a bit too serious?

P: Yeah

R: So, sometimes rather than silence we had music. Didn't we? So was that better for you? Or was that still a serious time?

P: That was still a bit serious, because then you needed to be so quiet so that then you could listen to the music.

**Comment [E11]:** Feeling scared or nervous



R: Do you think that we shouldn't be serious sometimes?

P: Uh. Well, sometimes if it's like a really important thing

R: Yeah

(Interruption as Sam is asked what he wants for lunch)

R: So some things, if they're really important, then we need to be serious. But you said it made you nervous? As well?

P: Yeah

R: Why did it make you nervous?

P: Sometimes you don't want to speak. Because then you might get told off or something like that.

**Comment [E12]:** Feeling scared or nervous

R: So it feels like you might get told off so you can't quite focus on anything else?

P: Yeah

R: That's really interesting, thank you so much Sam. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about before I pack them away?

P: Well I've got a question. What does "words" mean?

R: Yeah, that's a good point. Well I was thinking that some of the words we've had have been the same, so is it that you liked the story with those words or do you like the words that we say at the beginning or the end. I think that's what was in my head. But it's what you think. Yeah? Does that make sense? Do you think that we have had that?

P: Yeah

R: Right, so I'll pop those away, and then I've got something else to look at. So, I've now got 4 pictures and they each connect to one of the assemblies that we had. Ok. Were you here for all 4?

P: I don't think I remember this one

R: This one. Ok, well, what I've asked you to do is to pick out - so you weren't sure if you remember the one with the hat?

P: And I don't remember that one either

R: Yeah. So this was our 1st one, and this was the 2nd, this was the 3rd and this was the 4th. So, if you could pick one - so you might want to pick one of the ones you remember better. Could you tell me what we did in the assembly - maybe something you thought about? Maybe how you felt?

P: Well this one which is the star picture, and all the stars got washed up onto the beach, because, and then there was this girl picking stars up and that. And then there was this man which said "it isn't gonna make a difference" because there's tons of them on the beach, but then he said that it made a difference to that star.

R: Yeah. You've remembered that story very clearly. What did you think about, when you were hearing that story? And you were thinking about it afterwards?

P: Just thought that...it must be quite hard to be a starfish. Like, if you get washed up on a beach and you don't know what to do.

**Comment [E13]:** Literal reflection

R: Yeah. So you really thought about the starfish and what it's like when you don't know what to do?

P: Yeah

R: So did the story make you feel good? Or did it make you worry? Did it make you feel something else?

P: I wouldn't say it made me feel good but it just made me feel like, that the girl was doing a good thing. So sort of made me feel a bit better.

**Comment [E14]:** Think for yourself

R: Yeah. And did it make you think about anything in your own life?

P: Not really.

R: Not really. You were worried for the starfish but glad the girl was there?

P: Yeah

R: And...so if we pop those away. So now if we get what you've created from them. So, here are the responses you made from the 4 assemblies. So that was the 1st one, is that the 2nd one? Yes, because that's the 3rd one and that's yesterday's. So these are the responses that you've made and you've said that you enjoyed having that time to think. So can you pick one and tell me why you made that response? And whether you still - if you think about it again - so you've chosen the hand one.

P: Yeah

R: Can you tell me a bit about it?

P: Because all of those things are important to me and that.

R: So, you've put your dad your mum, your sister your brother and me. So all those things are important to you?

P: Yeah

R: Why are they important do you think? Why did you put them on there?

P: Because. They just have to be.

R: They have to be. Your family. What about these lines?

P: They're like my hand print register of my lines

R: So your handprint?

P: Yeah

R: Why did you put those on there?

P: Because...that...they're special to me?

R: They're special to you?

P: Yeah

R: Is that an important thing? To have? Yeah. What does it - when you were looking - did you look at your hand and draw them?

P: Yeah, but I put my hand like that.

R: You put your hand like that and drew them in. Do you think that it's important to think about - that they're special to you?

P: Yeah, but it's quite hard to understand how you all have different ones

**Comment [E15]:** Being unique together

R: It is. Which is that it can go - it's quite hard to understand how we're all so different and yet so similar. Thank you very much for that Sam. Would you mind if I asked you about one?

P: Mmhmm.

R: So, if we have a look at this one from yesterday, what were you drawing here?

P: Well, that's - I'm trying to find my mp4 player because my mum hid it from me because I always played with it, so now I have to try to find it back.

**Comment [E16]:** Literal reflection

R: Why did you draw that? What was it reminding you of?

P: Because. I really like playing games on it

R: So it's something that you really like and want to do? Because we were thinking about something from the story weren't we? What was it that we were thinking about?

P: Well I can't quite remember

R: You can't quite remember but you know that there was something that you needed to find? So I think we were thinking a bit about searching. Because you've also drawn some spirals on here. What were the spirals for?

P: They're my spinning tops. Which I was trying to find as well because I lost them.

**Comment [E17]:** Literal reflection

R: So there's all these things that you've lost?

P: Yeah

R: Or have been hidden and you want to find them. Is there anything else? Because sometimes there's different levels of things. Is there anything else? That you think you'd be looking for?

Maybe in life? We're looking for these things at the moment.

P: Not much.

R: Not much. So it's more important to look for the things?

P: Yeah

R: Brilliant. Thank you very much. Let's put these to the side as well. So. Sometimes - because we've looked a bit about spirituality and things before - sometimes people describe it in different ways. So for some people it might be we have a journey of life, so we have a life journey where we grow older, we might go to university, or get a job or have a family. And there's a spiritual journey - maybe we're finding out more about ourselves, about other people, about God, or about meaning. Some people might describe it as that we need food to grow - food for our body to grow, and food for our soul - for who we are and what that might be. Some people might describe it as we've got this outer self for people to see but we've also got an inner self that people don't always see. Is there one of these that makes sense to you most and why?

P: That one makes sense the most, but I sort of like that one.

R: You quite like the food. So maybe, as we go on our journey, you need different things at different times?

P: Yeah

R: So maybe a good way of thinking about it. So, if this is something that sort of makes sense, did any of the assemblies or any part of the assembly, or something we've thought about, help you or give you something, when you're on your journey - your spiritual journey.

P: They sort of helped me revise some things but I don't think they actually taught me anything they just sort of, like, made me look back

**Comment [E18]:** Making connections to understand their past

R: So they made you look back on things? Yeah. Was that helpful?

P: Yeah

R: Can you tell me a bit more? If you don't mind

P: I mean I don't really - like - sort of - it's hard to explain really because, sort of it's hard to explain thoughts, sometimes

R: Yes, because they're inside aren't they?

P: Yeah

R: So it's almost like you're having to explain something that's "inner" - make it clearer for others. So, it helped you to revise things. So was there anything that made you think back on and think yes I do think that?

P: I don't really know

R: You don't know, you just felt at the time

P: Yeah

R: That it did that. Thank you very much Sam. So we've thought a bit about what it might have given you. Do you think we are on a spiritual journey? We need to have these different things?

P: Sort of, but - I wouldn't really think of it that way, I'd think of it another way.

R: Do you have a clear way of thinking about it?

P: Not really

R: It's just there?

P: Yeah

R: Cool. So what I've got here - this is a blob tree. It's got these different blobs.

P: I've seen this before.

R: Have you? Where have you seen it?

P: Uh. Well I remember seeing it before.

R: I think I've had it before and Mr Z might have used it a couple of times. Could you choose the blob that best describes you during the collective worship? That we had. And can you tell me a little bit about why you've chosen that blob?

P: That one

R: This one here. Do you think you could just circle it for me? You took a while to look around but you've chosen now. Why did you choose that one do you think?

P: Because, it's sort of in between all the others. Because that one's sort of like "caring for each other", and that one's sort of like, uh, "I'm really unhappy".

R: So you think you're kind of in the middle?

P: Yeah

R: Why would you choose that for a collective worship one? Something between caring for each other and being unhappy and alone? Why is that?

P: But I do care for others, it's just that (Pause) Well - it's hard to sort of explain really because-

R: I've had a thought. Can I run it past you? That there's some way in which you're with other people and some way in which you're alone?

P: Yeah

R: Does that make sense?

**Comment [E19]:** Experiencing community

**Comment [E20]:** Feeling scared or nervous

P: Sort of like both

R: Yeah. And is there something about the emotion as well that you're in the middle of?

P: Not really

R: So it's the together and alone bit? In the middle. That was really interesting, thank you Sam. Okay. So, did you like having the assemblies?

P: Yeah!

R: Can you explain a bit more?

P: They're quite fun. And...they had to be quite quiet. Let you think. Sometimes it's hard to think when there's lots of noise going on so it's hard to concentrate.

**Comment [E21]:** Time to think

R: So it gave you that time and space? Because we don't have much time in school. So do you think that they're a good use of time?

P: Yeah

R: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

P: Mmm...Well I just said yes but I don't actually know why, but I think it's a good thing but it's just hard to explain why it is a good thing.

R: Yeah. So, if we took them out altogether and didn't have any assemblies

P: I think that'd be a bit, sort of, not very good. Because then there wouldn't be any religious, like, thinking - something like that.

**Comment [E22]:** No other time

R: And is it good to do some religious thinking?

P: Yeah

R: Because you've said before that you hadn't really had - done much thinking about what you - or maybe that's not quite what you said? Because you haven't been brought up in a particularly religious way you said at one point-

P: Yeah but then I asked my mum and she said that I would choose my own religion.

R: Do you think that it's helped you to think about that?

P: Yeah

R: How has it helped you. Sorry, you don't have to answer if you think I'm pushing you too far. How do you think it's helped you?

P: I don't really know

R: That's fine, we'll leave it there. If you could keep one thing from the assemblies, what would it be?

P: The candle.

Comment [E23]: Focal point

R: The candle. Because you haven't mentioned that but could you tell me a bit more about the candle?

P: Because...well I don't know why but it's just sort of quite helpful in a way.

Comment [E24]: Focal point

R: Because we say some words, don't we, when I light the candle? So is it the words that are helpful or is it lighting the candle?

P: Yeah

R: Which one? Or both?

P: Um. Sort of like, when you say that, if you're a certain religion you might think a certain thing about the candle.

Comment [E25]: Inclusive

R: And that's helpful

P: Yeah

R: Did you ever change what you thought? Or did you like hearing them all?

P: I don't think I really changed, because I don't think I really had a thought in the first place.

R: So you just listened to them all?

P: Yeah

R: Sam than you so much. Is there anything more that you think you'd like to tell me that you think "I haven't quite been able to say that and I think it's - would be useful"?

P: Not really.

R: Thank you very much.

*Interview 2: Sanjiv (Other Faith)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: Think I managed to start it recording without knowing it. Okay. So. What lesson have you just been having?

P: Literacy.

R: Literacy. And have you started writing?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah? And what were you writing about?

P: The...well we were doing the first paragraph of for and against, so I done the stars.

R: So you'd chosen your topic and you were going to do the for and against. Brilliant. And I dragged you away.

P: Yeah.

R: (Laughs) We'll make sure you have enough time to catch up.

P: Well I was just about to finish on the other hand and then they told me to go.

R: Well at least you know where you are and you're ready. Sorry about that. What did you have for breakfast this morning?

P: Err...cereal.

R: Cereal. What sort of cereal did you have?

P: These weird chocolate hoops.

R: They're weird?

P: Yeah. They just tasted a bit weird.

R: Ahh no! Chocolatey cereal and it's a bit weird! I had rice crispies, so I didn't have any chocolate sadly. I'll sort that out later today I think. Lovely. So, hopefully we've warmed up a bit and we can remember a few things about what we're doing. So, we've had some different class assemblies for the last four weeks, and I was just wondering: have you noticed anything about them?

P: No.

R: No?

P: Not really.

R: Has there been anything different?



P: It's kind of been a bit weird because when we - I can't - I think we done the class assembly about the - before we done a assembly about, like, the one in Thailand or something? Something that happened there? It's just a bit different because, talking about that, and then now we're just talking about religious, so, it's a bit, weird.

**Comment [E26]:** Learning about ideas/beliefs

R: So do you think they're been more religious?

P: Yeah.

R: What's made them more religious?

P: Basically, say, if you're agnostic then the (WORD) of the light makes you think if God is real or not. Yeah.

**Comment [E27]:** Marked/bounded; Inclusive

R: So kind of the bit at the beginning helps to make it more religious. So you mentioned I think it was the Philippines that we looked at when there had been the tornado.

P: Yeah.

R: So which did you prefer?

P: Don't really know. I kind of like the new ones because you get to kind of like write - um - draw on a piece of paper, but the first ones they made you - time - to like think. You had quite a lot of time to think. But this one you get longer and you get time to think and time to draw and kind of express your feelings and stuff.

**Comment [E28]:** Time to think

**Comment [E29]:** Requiring response

R: So, the drawing is different - expressing feelings a bit more.

P: Yeah.

R: But both had a bit of time to think.

P: Yeah

R: So, I've got some words here about our class assemblies. So these are some of the things that I think have been - there's been in there. What I'd like you to do is to pick one that you think was your favourite part in the assembly, and explain why you've chosen that word. See there's lots. So, have a look at them, pick your favourite part and explain your choice.

P: Dunno. Hard to choose!

R: So many! If you want to pick more than one then that's fine.

P: Okay, I've got three.

R: Okay, let's hear them.

P: I like "pebbles" so that's my first one.

R: Okay, do you want to tell me about "pebbles"? And why you like them.

P: Just like - they look quite nice. And it looks like, so a pebble can, like, there's different ones, so say if you like a darker blue then another blue, then you can choose it and, yeah and its nice to see what one, what different pebbles are that there are, and which ones everybody chose, and then put them together.

**Comment [E30]:** Think for yourself

**Comment [E31]:** Being unique together

R: Why do you think that's a good thing? So we've got the different colours and everyone chose them.

P: Because they can choose what they want. It's not like there's just one colour so you had to choose that one, you could choose. And they were in different shapes as well, so someone could choose the same colour as you but a different shape.

**Comment [E32]:** Think for yourself

R: Was it good to have that choice and then to have them there?

P: Yeah.

R: What - did it make you think of anything?

P: Well it made me think that, um, dunno. Just made me think that there's lots of choice and - yeah. I'd like to do that in every class assembly, not just the first one and just leave them there.

**Comment [E33]:** Inclusive

R: You'd like to place them? Or choose?

P: Before the class assembly you could put them back into the first bowl and then we'd all do that again. Coz we done that the first assembly, but it'd be nice to do them every assembly.

R: So for you, actually, being able to place them there is a nice thing to do?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you think your choice would change sometimes?

P: Um, yeah.

R: So, that would be interesting. Maybe there would be the chance for you to think who you felt like today and choose one for that. Lovely. Than you very much for telling me about those. Right. You said you had three, so what was the next one?

P: Um. Silence.

R: Can you tell me why you've chosen silence?

P: Because, before in the class assemblies when we didn't do as much religion, everybody would put their hand up and like said what they wanted to. But if you didn't want to say anything about it, it's good because, you can just keep it in to yourself and nobody's really saying "do you have any ideas about this." You can just keep it in yourself and it's just nice for everybody to be quiet and have a few minutes of silence.

**Comment [E34]:** Personal

**Comment [E35]:** Time to think

R: Is it something that you've had before? Or is it something that you like?

P: I just like it.

R: You just like it. Thank you very much. Yeah, it's interesting how sometimes we want to talk and sometimes we just want some time.

P: Yeah.

R: And your third one?

P: "Together."

R: "Together." Can you tell me why you've chosen that one?

P: Because everybody's together and...yeah, we all got to choose, like, a pebble put it in, and nobody was left out. And if you weren't here then you still had a chance to get one in and - it's just nice to be together, because when you're drawing if you don't have any ideas then you can ask someone.

**Comment [E36]:** Inclusive

**Comment [E37]:** Share ideas

R: So you can share ideas? Even if you -

P: Even if you want to - yeah.

R: You chose silence as well. So, did you still feel-

P: That you could share some ideas. But if they're too personal then you could keep them in.

R: Even when you were silent did you still - like - did you like the fact that you were being silent with other people?

P: Yeah.

R: Or would you have preferred to be silent just on your own somewhere?

P: Other people, because I feel like I don't feel like I'm the only one who's actually being silent. Because if everybody's being silent then we all know that we're all thinking, and, we're all - yeah, we're all thinking and praying.

**Comment [E38]:** Think together

**Comment [E39]:** Opportunity to pray

R: Did you feel able to pray? During that time then?

P: Yeah. It was nice and still and nobody made any noise.

R: And that gave you that opportunity. Thank you very much. Now I was just wondering as well if you had a least favourite.

P: "Drawing".

R: Why was that your least favourite?

P: Because I'm not that good at it!

R: So, if you're not good at it then why was that then?

P: Because I didn't really have any ideas, so, I think ideas and drawing would be my least favourite, because I didn't really have any good ideas, so, I couldn't really draw them.

**Comment [E40]:** Have ideas

R: So was it quite hard to turn what you'd been thinking about into something to produce?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much. Is there another reason why drawing was difficult?

P: No, just that.

R: The ideas. Thank you very much Sanjiv. Okay. So we're going to think a little bit more about the content of the different assemblies and what they were about. So I've got four pictures from each assembly. Let me get rid of all these words. I've got these here. First assembly, second, third one and the fourth one. So, I was just wondering if you could pick one of them and tell me a bit about that assembly and maybe say some things that we did, or some of the things that we thought about? Maybe how you felt during it? Anything you want to tell me about it.

P: Um, probably this one.

R: You've chosen the starfish one. What can you tell me about it?

P: Um. It's nice because, um, even though that she - even though the girl couldn't save all of them, she saved some of them. So, it was better than to save some of them than none of them.

R: And what did you think about when you heard that story? Because you've remembered it well.

P: I thought that maybe the man was a bit - kind of, I dunno. Kind of a bit jealous in a way because, um, he's not willing to help the starfish when he always comes and "lights" - I think? And, um, yeah. So, I think he might feel a bit jealous because she's helping them - it's quite hard to explain.

R: Mmmm. But, yeah, you thought about the different people and how they were feeling?

P: Yeah.

R: Lovely. We might have a look later at what you've created - if there was anything else? Did it make you feel good to hear the story? Or sad about the starfish?

P: Made me feel a bit happy. To say that even if you're young you're still helping people or things, so, you don't have to be old, you don't have to be old to help people, you can be quite young.

R: That's lovely. What a thing to have thought about. Is there a second one you'd like to tell me about?

P: No.

R: Not really. Can't remember them as well? Okay. So, if we have a look, I've got here the responses that you made from the four assemblies. So you've already said that you found it hard to do this bit. Is there one that you - that even though it was hard to do the drawing, or hard to think of, is there one you can tell me about why you made the response? And what you think about it?

P: I dunno. Um. It's either between these two.

R: Yeah? You can either tell me about both?

P: Okay, can I tell you about both then? So, this one was -

R: The starfish.

P: Yeah, so, family and friends.

R: So why did you - you drew a starfish, and then you put those on: your family on one and your friends on another. Can you think what you were - can you describe your idea behind it.

P: Um. So, I was kind of saying that you should help both because they're starfish, and she helped - she helped them - so saying that you can help - you can help both, but if you can't then you have to choose. Which is quite hard. So.

**Comment [E41]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: So it can be hard to choose who you should help sometimes?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you feel sometimes you are torn? Between helping family and friends?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah, so it made you think about that. Is there anything more that you'd like to tell me about it?

P: No.

R: No. Lovely. You said that you had something about this one as well?

P: Um. Was this the one - the first one? With the Moses?

R: Yes. Yes it was.

P: Okay. Um, I drew a hand, because - Oh no. So, I put my family in there.

R: You drew a hand and you put your family?

P: Yeah.

R: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

P: Um, because, so, don't really know how to explain it.

R: It's really hard isn't it?

P: Yeah.

R: Can you remember anything about the Moses story? And how that connected?

P: No... Was it - no I can't remember.

R: Because he was saying that he didn't think he could do something that he was asked to.

P: Oh yeah.

R: Yeah. So do you remember - we then looked at our hands didn't we?

P: Oh yeah. What things we can do and what things we can't do.

R: Yeah, so what things we can do and what makes us who we are. So, it's quite a long time ago isn't it?

P: Yeah. I can't really remember.

R: Maybe you were thinking that these people were the ones that made you who you were. Good. And here we've got Elijah and the cave, is that right?

P: Yeah.

R: Good.

P: That one - I have three sisters, but I could only fit two sisters because there's only five fingers.

R: Did you think about giving yourself six fingers?

P: No. There's only one well - because - it's either five or four, because in cartoons they have those fingers.

R: So you could cope with four but not six?

P: Yeah.

R: So did you think of all three of your sisters? When you were doing that?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah.

P: Yeah, if I'd thought about it actually because I took me off and put a sister on.

R: Why didn't you?

P: Or we could have put me on here, and my sister on the thumb.

R: So you could have had me in the middle?

P: Yeah.

R: Sister on the edge. Yeah. It's interesting, because you know what you were thinking then. And so there's something not quite right about not having all three sisters on there? Maybe still, but you know that you were thinking of it. Good. So you think your family makes you who you are?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah? Thank you very much for those. Right. Now, I've got a final thing, because we've thought a little bit about spirituality in the lessons that we had last half term. Just pick these up. And there's quite a few ways other people have tried to explain what it might be. And one of them, say, it's a bit like we're on a journey. So, we might be a child and go to school, go to university, get a job, have a family, and we've got that journey through our life. But there's also a spiritual journey. So we've got our life journey, but we've also got a spiritual journey where we develop what we think and what we believe as we go through, and we have times which seem - which help our spiritual journey. Other people might say that we need food to grow. So, food for our bodies, but we also need food for the soul. So we need food for, kind of, our soul, our inner mind and what that might be. And some people might say that we've got an outer self but also an inner self, um, so the outer self is what other people see and our inner self is what we keep to ourselves, most of the time, but do share sometimes. Does one of these in particular make more sense to you? Or a combination?

P: Probably that one. The journey.

R: The journey one. Yeah. Does it make you think of anything?

P: Makes me think, like, some things are hard and some things are easy. But, still, a journey.

R: Yeah, and we keep going.

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you. So, did any of the assemblies, or any part of the assembly help you to keep going with a hard bit? Or an easier bit? Or did they take you one way? Or take you another way?

P: Um. Trying to remember the stories. Um. This one makes me think of the starfish, because she kept on going, even though the man said, "you won't do it, it's too long, it will take ages." She still kept on doing it and she got quite a lot of starfish - she saved quite a lot of starfish. So, yeah, don't give up.

**Comment [E42]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Yeah, so to not give up. So it helps you with your spiritual journey because of that sense of keeping on going, like she did?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you. Is there anything else you'd like to say on that?

P: No.

R: Thank you very much. Now, we're getting near the end. I've got a blob tree here. You might have seen them before because I think Mr Z or Ms Y might have had them at some point. So I was just wondering - so we've got the different blobs, different experiences or feeling different things. I was wondering, which blob best describes you during the collective worship, and can you tell me a bit about your choice? You could maybe circle it.

P: Okay.

R: And tell me your choice. So have a think which one.

P: Um. Probably this one. Yep.

R: So, you've circled one of the ones in a pair.

P: Yeah.

R: Got an arm round each shoulder. Can you tell me a bit about your choice?

P: Because, um, they're kind of like friends and they're helping each other. So, they're not going all the way to the top, because even if they can't go to the top at least they went somewhere. Maybe one of them can go to the top but the other one can't so they just left it and stay together.

**Comment [E43]:** Experiencing community

R: So there's something important about helping someone else?

P: Yeah.

R: Why have you chosen that for collective worship? So really helpful thinking?

P: Because it's basically everybody together and you can share ideas, so, just, yeah. Because they're together.

**Comment [E44]:** Share ideas

R: What do you think the top would be? Because you said that maybe one could get to the top.

P: I think he'd still feel a bit - I think he would feel about that one.

R: So there's one at the top who's looking -

P: Quite angry. I think he would be a bit sad about this one.

R: So, kind of if you do something but you do it alone -

P: Yeah.

R: You might not end up. Would the top - in collective worship what do you think the top would represent?

P: Um.

R: What is it that you might or might not get to?

P: Don't really know.

R: That was an impossible question I think. What do you think - do you have any idea what the bottom might be?

P: A bit angry, and a bit annoyed. Think he would feel a bit annoyed and he would, but, because they're working together, I think they'd be quite happy.

R: Yeah, so there really is an important thing about doing it together. Thank you very much. Okay. So, do you think overall you liked having the assemblies?

P: Yeah.



R: Can you tell me a bit why you liked them?

P: Because like sometimes you have quite a lot of time to think and reflect, and stuff.

**Comment [E45]:** Time to think

R: Because often you don't go to - so you came to the class assemblies before, but you often don't go to assemblies in-

P: Yeah. Because class assemblies weren't really religious so.

**Comment [E46]:** No other time

R: Yeah. So, like, do you think you miss out on some of that time to think sometimes?

P: Yeah. Because I don't go to assemblies and normally at assemblies when it's time - when they pray, that's when they kind of think about things and...

**Comment [E47]:** Inclusive

R: Yeah. So you don't get that time usually?

P: Yeah.

R: Did you find that this was a time that you could do that.

P: Yeah.

R: So even though you said it was a bit more religious was it still-

P: Yeah you could have quite a lot of time to think, even when you were drawing, or...

**Comment [E48]:** Time to think

R: And did you feel that you could be open? Even so - you remembered the Moses and the Elijah story. So did you find that with those that it was still helpful to listen?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you. Now we don't have much time in school, so do you think they were a good use of time?

P: Yeah, they were. Might - could have been a bit shorter though. Because, even though we had time to think, I think they should be a bit, maybe two minutes shorter.

R: Keep them a bit shorter.

P: Yeah.

R: I was wondering - Go on.

P: Because, um, it's nice because if it gets too long then you have too much, then, it's just, you have a lot of time, a lot of time to, like, you have new ideas, so it's kind of hard to like put all your ideas in one thing.

**Comment [E49]:** Have ideas

**Comment [E50R49]:** Requiring response

R: So it becomes a bit too much?

P: Yeah.

R: In one. Do you think - um - I was going to ask - but I've forgotten what my question was. Oh

well. Thank you, that's really helpful. If you could only keep - oh I remember what it was. Because you didn't like the drawing so much, would you take that bit out, or do you think it would lose something?

P: Oh well, I'd kind of like to do some writing or something like that.

R: Oh, so have the chance to write?

P: Yeah. Or like, just, so, a quick one minute, after we finish the - no, just - one minute before we leave to go home, we have like, a piece of paper and we feel - write how we feel how the assembly works, so, could either write a smiley face if you thought it was quite good, or a sad face if you thought "I didn't really understand," or "I didn't get it." And yeah, you could put a really happy face if you thought it was really nice and yeah.

R: So you could just express how you felt with it?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah, that'd be really-

P: And then you could have a chance to see what we need to change, and all the people who made the sad faces could make happy faces next time. So it's just nice to see what people like and what people don't like.

R: So do you think it's important that we keep improving the assemblies and making sure people feel happy?

P: Yeah. **And don't ask people to write their names on it** because then you feel - it's kind of like, to see - yeah.

**Comment [E51]:** Personal

R: Yeah. I think that I would do that differently next time and just have you come and pick - remember we were talking about them? Yeah, and I'd take names off as well.

P: Okay.

R: So that's a really helpful thing. Thank you Sanjiv. Why would you take a name off? Because I think the same so I'm just wondering whether you think the same as me?

P: It's just weird because people can - people can feel like- so if somebody has smiley face and somebody has a sad face but they kind of like like the same thing, but it's just weird - it's just cool to see - it's just nice to see what people think. And how many people liked it and how many people didn't.

R: So, get a response, but it doesn't have to be a really personal thing?

P: Yeah.

R: If you could keep only one thing from the assemblies what do you think it would be?

P: **The thinking time.**

**Comment [E52]:** Time to think

R: The thinking time.

P: Like when you're looking at the candle or the board or - yeah. Kind of at the beginning when - yeah. Just looking at the candle. Just think. I'd like to keep that.

**Comment [E53]:** Focal point

**Comment [E54]:** Marked/bounded

R: Keep that?

P: Yeah.

R: So is it the candle particularly? Or was it all the thinking time?

P: All the thinking time.

R: Thank you very much Sanjiv. Is there anything else that you'd like to say about it?

P: No.

*Interview 3: Isobel (Agnostic-Atheist)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: Okay. ah, how are you doing today? Are you alright?

P: Okay.

R: Have you just changed to maths?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah? Do you know what you were doing yet?

P: Yeah, well what we were doing now was just adding the...four numbers together.

R: So you were adding different numbers. And what did you have for breakfast this morning? To get you ready for the day?

P: Mmmm...I think it was malt wheats and toast and some yoghurt.

R: What a variety! I had rice crispies, so very boring. But, hopefully it'll last me through. Brilliant. Now, we've had some different class assemblies in the last four weeks, and I was wondering if you've noticed anything different about them? Or noticed anything about them?

P: No.

R: Not really. Was there anything different do you think? To what we had before?

P: That we got to makes things for it.

R: You got to make something for it. You hadn't done that before. I'm trying to think what else we did. So, someone else commented on the fact that we had an assembly on the Phillippines before. Is there anything different from that?

P: No.

R: No, not really? Thank you. Is there anything different from the assemblies we have in hall?

P: Ummm a little bit, because in the hall sometimes you're...it can be like, um, like, a bit noisy. and in class assembly, most of the time we just have quiet time.

**Comment [E55]:** Time to think

R: So it's much quieter in class? Is there anything else different from the assemblies in the hall?

P: Mmmm...more busier?

R: So, more people is busier? Okay. So, I've got some words here about some of the things that I think have been in our class assemblies. And I was just wondering if you could pick one of them, or someone picked three, so you can pick more than one, that was your favourite part of the four assemblies that we had. There we go. And if you could pick one and then explain why you've chosen that word.

P: "Drawing," because, um, because sometimes it's hard to say things and it's good to draw it and let it out but not saying it, but you're trying to say it through whatever you're drawing.

**Comment [E56]:** Requiring response

R: Mmm. So you can try and say something through your drawing? Do you find that that's an easier thing to do?

P: Yeah.

R: So there's something about not saying it: why is it good sometimes to not say it?

P: Well maybe sometimes when you say it you might think, "Oh, maybe other people might hear it." But then when you draw it you might even fold it up and just let it go.

**Comment [E57]:** Personal

**Comment [E58]:** Requiring response

R: So you fold it up. So you used the phrase "let it go," there as well, do you - can you explain that a bit more?

P: Well, um, so if you're feeling something but you want to just draw it, you draw it you don't have to worry if anyone else can hear it, so you can just let your feelings go inside whatever you're drawing.

**Comment [E59]:** Requiring response

R: So you can put all your feelings into the drawing? And then is there a time - when we were then putting the drawings into the bowl, or on the stand, did - where did you feel the feelings went? Did they stay with you or did they go with the drawing?

P: They went with the drawing.

**Comment [E60]:** Requiring response

R: Was that a helpful thing? Or unhelpful?

P: Quite helpful.

R: Can you tell me why it might have been helpful?

P: Well, um, because, um...because when, when - I don't know.

R: You don't know why? But it just was? Mmm. So, I wonder - is it helpful to have kind of thought about things if they were maybe difficult, or things you sometimes don't think about? Yeah?

P: Yeah.

R: And if they have been difficult, how might it help? To then put it...

P: Well, um, then you can just, well it might still be a bit difficult, but then it might be a bit less difficult for you to worry about it. Because, you care about wherever it is, but you're also trying to put it, just put it behind...like, try and not always think about it.

**Comment [E61]:** Feeling scared or nervous

R: That you've done some thinking about it so you can now put it to one side? Thank you. Is there another word that was a good part?

P: "Story."

R: Tell me a bit about "story."

P: Well, because then you can learn about other people and how, like, they are. And it can give you - it can give you something to think about. If they've helped anybody or they've done something, if you can do it or something.

**Comment [E62]:** Learn from ideas/beliefs

**Comment [E63]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So it made you think about - so did it just make you think about the person or did it make you think about you as well?

P: Both.

R: Both. Can you tell me a bit more?

P: Well, for the person it'd be like what I felt like, what other people...about what they've done, and then for me what I could do...and like, see, what other people have been doing and compare them with me and see if I could do them as well.

**Comment [E64]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Yeah, so, you saw what other people had done and thought what you could do? That's really helpful, thank you. Were there any stories you didn't like or did you like all of the stories?

P: I liked most of the stories.

R: Most of them. So was there one you didn't like as much?

P: I can't remember them.

R: You can't remember them all [laughs]. So the ones you remember you liked?

P: Yeah.

R: Which ones can you remember?

P: I kind of remember the one we did last time...I forgot what it's about but I just remember...I just remember a little bit. And maybe I think I remember a little bit about the one before. That's all I can remember.

R: So you remember them at the time and reflect on it, but don't need to remember them?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you. We might have a look at that in a minute as well, so we won't go into it. Is there anything that was a least favourite thing?

P: I don't know.

R: You don't know. None of them really stand out? Lovely. That's okay, you don't have to have a least favourite. Okay. So, we're going to move on to thinking about those stories, or each bit of Collective Worship. And I've got here, I've got a picture from each of the stories. That was the first story, this was the second, and the third story and the fourth story. I was just wondering if you could - um, so they're all connected to one of the assemblies that we had, and can you pick one and tell me a bit about that assembly? Maybe what it was about? Maybe what you thought about? Or how you felt during it?

P: This one.

R: So you've remembered it having seen the picture? Okay, can you - so you've picked the one with the hat. Can you tell me a bit about that story?

P: Well because he got given a hat and then, and then he was, then he thought "Oh well," because it was raining, and I think it was the milkman, was getting wet so he gave him the hat, to be very helpful, and then he got upset because he wasn't wearing it a couple of times, and after a while he found out that his hat was useful for two things: a place for a puppy or someone to sleep in, and someone - and to keep your head warm. So he thought he was very happy and very pleased that he was able to give the hat to someone else.

R: Mmm, and that it had been used - something you've given. Yeah, you have remembered that story well! Thank you. You didn't know it before. What did you think when you heard that story?

P: I thought that, um, like, because, um, like, I give some of my old things to my cousins and it's kind of like the hat, and then she can use them for different other things. Because I think once she used it to give to someone else because they were really cold.

**Comment [E65]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: So you thought about another time when someone had given something. Yeah. You said before that the stories made you think about what someone else had done and what you could do - did it make you think of anything you could do?

P: Well, um, maybe, I was thinking that any old toys I don't want I could like give to someone else and they could use for, maybe to make things for people who don't have anything?

**Comment [E66]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So there was something that you could do? Thank you very much Isobel. You said that you remembered a bit the last story we had because it was yesterday, which was this picture. Can you remember anything - can you tell me a bit about that assembly?

P: I can't remember it now.

R: If we take the picture away - do you remember, that's kind of from the end, and we had someone called Elijah. Do you remember what happened?

P: No. I think I've forgotten it now.

R: Well let's see when we look at the pictures and see if it comes. So, this was the first one wasn't it?

P: I don't even know which this one was.

R: I think that's the second one. So, these were some of the responses that you made in the four assemblies. Can you pick one and tell me a bit about the response and why you made it?

P: This one.

R: You've chosen the starfish.

P: Well, because I thought that it's good to help the wildlife as well. Because there's getting a lot less wildlife outside, because things - because people are cutting more trees down for paper, and stuff. And also help children who are ill, because there are some children in different countries who

are really ill, and they need someone to help look after them.

**Comment [E67]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Mmmm. So it made you think of both those things? Why did it make you think of - or why did you put people that you could help?

P: Well, because, it's sad if your family is going to die, and people help you most of the time, so I think it's good if you help other people, who can't, like, do anything about it but you can.

**Comment [E68]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So they might not be able to do anything but you can help them? Thank you very much Isobel. Can I ask you about this one? Because it might remind you a bit of what you were thinking about - so this was from the fourth assembly. What do you remember from this one?

P: Well, um... Well I drew that to help people, because, um I think she was falling down this step and that woman was helping her. So, jump up and come and help her.

R: Okay, so you've got one person who's helping someone not to fall down. Where are the steps going to?

P: I don't know where they're going to.

R: You just put them in?

P: Yeah.

R: Because there are some things.. like I wonder if these words - so you chose these words - what were they?

P: Mmm... Kindness is for helping, hope is for someone you like, you're hoping for someone to come and help you, come and play with you and be kind, love is like all of - both of them put together.

R: Yeah. And I - so I wonder if these stairs - were they leading to these things? Or is this separate from this?

P: Well...um, I think the stairs was going... I think these ones was "love," and these steps were kindness and hope.

R: Ahhh, so this is to illustrate each of the things?

P: Yeah.

R: Um, because we were thinking in this story a bit about a search, for something. Either searching for God, or searching for meaning, so are these the things that you were searching for?

P: Yeah.

R: I find it interesting, though, that without - they're kind of helping each other. So that - because kindness is something that you're searching for, in each one you've actually got two people. Why do you think you've put two people?

P: Well, because "kindness" you normally have two people, because, um, because that would be kind if you're doing one thing for another person if they're not there, but it's easier to show that



with two people.

R: Yeah, and maybe the same with “love” as well? That actually...

P: You need two people.

R: Yeah, you need someone to love and to love you? Yeah, oh that’s lovely, thank you very much Isobel. Now, um, I’ve got here, because we’ve looked a bit about spirituality, and these are some ways that some people might describe spirituality, or spiritual life. So this is, that sometimes we have a life journey, so our life journey we might go to school, go to secondary school, maybe go to university, or get a job, have a family, go travelling, different things we might decide to do in our life. But the spiritual journey, we’re still on a journey, but it might be developing what we believe and what we think, and different things that we meet on the way and taking us on. Some people think maybe it’s like we have food for our bodies so we can grow and be healthy, and we also need some sort of food, a different sort of food for the soul, so for, our thoughts and our beliefs and our minds. So other people might describe it as we have an outer self that people can see, but we have an inner self which we often keep to ourselves and only share with a few people maybe. Do any of these - or which one makes the most sense to you do you think?

P: This one.

R: The outer self and the inner self. Yeah. So do you, so, um, there’s this kind of person we can see, and this one that’s a bit more hidden. Did any of the assemblies or any part of the assembly help you develop or think about your inner self?

P: Yeah.

R: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

P: Well...um because most of them were like, working towards something, like being kind, and it was easier to think about something but - but not to show it on the outer self, but just keep it inside.

**Comment [E69]:** Learn from ideas/beliefs

**Comment [E70]:** Personal

R: So there was something that - for you inside, but not something that you wanted to show to other people? Was there an example of anything you thought that you’d mind sharing?

P: I can’t remember now.

R: You don’t have to - that’s fine. Because sometimes you forget what you leave behind as well. Thank you. Now, one of the final things I’ve got, at the end, is I’ve got here a blob tree with lots of people on it. And, I was just wondering which blob best describes you during the Collective Worships that we had, and can you tell me a bit about why you’ve chosen that one. Could - drawing round it maybe.

P: I think that one.

R: That one, you think. Why have you chosen that one?

P: Well, because it’s, because, um, it’s best, from here it’s good to look up on what - what I believe and stuff. Because I never actually done it before since I’ve been at school.

**Comment [E71]:** Work out own beliefs

**Comment [E72]:** No other time

R: You’ve never?...

P: Done this before, since I've been at school, or anything like this, so it was easier for me to go and see - see, um, what I believe and different beliefs.

**Comment [E73]:** Work out own beliefs

**Comment [E74]:** Experience different beliefs

R: So you could think about different beliefs and think about - I like the idea of looking up and seeing those beliefs. Why do you think you're looking up and not looking down.

P: Well, um, because, um, because when I look down sometimes, um, I just think about me and when I look up I think about other people and me at the same time. And how we relate.

**Comment [E75]:** Experiencing community

R: Okay. And so there's - so in the Collective Worship there's - it helped you to look up a bit more? Thank you very much. Lovely. So, did you like having these assemblies? And if so, why or if not why not?

P: A little bit.

R: A little bit. so do you want to talk about, like, why, a little bit yes but no as well.

P: Yes because it's good to see different people belief in different thoughts, and no - and a bit no because, um, because, if it, because if it's different things, some things there's weird things happening, some things do get a bit worrying half way through. Because my thoughts quickly change.

**Comment [E76]:** Experience different ideas

**Comment [E77]:** Sensing the numinous

R: So it can get a bit worrying sometimes? When your thoughts change? What - so you said "Sometimes when a weird thing happens," can you explain that a bit more? Like, is it...

P: Well, um, well, um, like, if I'm thinking about it, sometimes my mind just quickly changes to something else, like maybe related or not related and sometimes it's a worrying thing, about it.

**Comment [E78]:** Feeling scared of nervous

R: So it does sometimes make you think of worrying things? So it's not anything that's done that's weird, it's a change in you, that sometimes feels a bit weird. Is it sometimes a good thing?

P: Mmm...sometimes a good thing.

R: And sometimes a worrying thing. Do you think it's important to have those moments even if it's worrying, or do you think it's best not to have them?

P: I think it's best to have them.

R: So even though it's not always a nice thing. Why can it be good to have them?

P: Well, because, most, sometimes you need something, something like that, and, like, so you can think about it and then maybe have a quick think, and then say, "don't worry," I'm not going to worry about it for now, and then move on, but just have like a minute to think about it.

**Comment [E79]:** Requiring response

R: So it gives you that minute to think about it but then to move on as well? Thank you Isobel. So we don't have much time in school, with all the lessons we do and everything else. Do you think that the class assemblies we did were a good use of time?

P: Yeah.

R: Can you tell me a bit about why?

P: Um, because, it's good to have a few minutes just - like, everyone have a minute quiet before they go home, because you might not get any time at home. Apart from when you go to bed, but sometimes that's when you sleep so you don't have much time like to think about different things like that.

**Comment [E80]:** No other time

R: So it gives you that time to think that you might not have at other times? Why is it good to have that time to think?

P: Well...so, um, so, you, you maybe know about different people, and you know your feel - and then you have a minute just to think of your feelings. So what you think about it.

**Comment [E81]:** Experience different beliefs

**Comment [E82]:** Time to think

R: So a chance to think about you and your feelings. So if we could only keep one thing from them, what would it be?

P: Hmm...don't know.

R: Not sure. It's hard to pick out one thing. Is there anything that you wouldn't have?

P: I don't know either.

R: You don't know either. So, it's okay as it is. Thank you very much Isobel. Is there anything else you'd like to say that you think you haven't been asked a question about? That you think is important?

P: No.

R: No? Well thank you very much.

*Interview 4: Olivia (Agnostic)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: That on as well. So you were just in maths? How was it?

P: Yeah. It's good.

R: Yeah?

P: I thought it'd be very hard, but surprisingly it's quite easy.

R: Fantastic! You should think, yes I can do maths. And what did you have for breakfast this morning?

P: I had...I think I had coco pops, yeah.

R: Ah, you've slightly upped me! I had rice crispies. You had yours with chocolate on!

P: Well I don't really like milk, so I like coco pops because when I stir it it turns to chocolate milk and I'm alright with that.

R: You can cope with chocolatey milk?

P: Yeah.

R: That's a good reason to have it. Now, I'd like to ask you a bit about the different class assemblies we've had for the last four weeks, and I was just wondering: have you noticed anything about them?

P: Well I've noticed they're a little bit religious and stuff. Like it seems each one of them has a moral and stuff? So, like on the starfish one is like helps people. Well, and starfish. And on, coz like, on the one when that boy gave the man a hat I thought that was if someone looks troubled give them something, that might be nice, to help.

**Comment [E83]:** Learn from ideas/beliefs

R: So you kind of got this moral from each one?

P: Uhuh.

R: Well we'll have a look at those in a bit. Why do you think they were more religious?

P: Well, coz, well I don't, I'm not, I'm not sure because when, like, with the fire thing when you say "if you're an atheist" and they're all sort of religion things. So I thought that it was a bit religious.

**Comment [E84]:** Experience different beliefs

R: So it seemed a bit more religious from that opening?

P: Uhuh.

R: Is it - do you think there has been any difference with what's been the content of it rather than what we begin with as well?

P: I'm not sure.

R: You're not sure? But it does feel like-

P: Because I don't understand what that question means, I'm sorry.

R: Ah, so content is a bit like what you write about in literacy, you've got the structure, the paragraphs and you think about the punctuation and things to give it structure and then you've got the content is what we actually write about.

P: Mmm.

R: So I guess things like do you think having the stories were any different, or -

P: I liked having the stories with it, coz, like, when we're asked to draw something we're like, "but - but what? Like, are we meant to draw Bilbo Baggins, say, or something?" So-

R: So you never know quite what to do?

P: Yeah, but when there's stories in it we know what we're drawing and stuff.

Comment [E85]: Have ideas

R: So it can give you an idea?

P: Yeah.

R: Is there anything else you think's been different?

P: I think it's different because one of our class assemblies once was on penguins.

R: Yeah it was.

P: Video of penguins. So I just thought, like, coz I thought like next week it'll be like polar bears or something in the antarctic, and when I was doing this I was like "Oh!" And then next week I was like "Oh!" again! And then the third week of doing it I was like, "Okay, I enjoy these." So, I think it's - like I think the class assemblies for the past four weeks have been similar but different stories and different things that we're supposed to draw.

R: They've been similar in lots of ways but not-

P: But not exactly the same.

R: Not exactly the same each time. You've said by the third week you were like, "Oh! I enjoy these." Did it take a bit of time to get into them?

P: Well coz on the first one I thought that was like the first and the last one we'd ever do. And on the second one I was like "Okay." And on the third one I was like, "Actually I'm quite starting to enjoy these!" Coz, like on the first and second I was a bit like "Errr, story time? And art?" So when we started to do it I started to get what we're doing. And stuff.

R: What do you think we were doing?

P: Well, it's sort of hard to explain.

R: It is! It's very hard to explain. Do you have any ideas?

P: No, not really.

R: Why did you - what is it that you enjoy about them? Once you'd settled into it?

P: I like - I like sort of, when we're drawing I like expressing your feelings onto the thing. So like, some of the boys they put xboxes but in my opinion I think that's a bit mmm so it's just that it's their own opinion so I'm just sort of thinking well, if they hope for an xbox I suppose it's not my choice to tell them if they can or cannot have one, and um...okay I think - hang on - what was the question again?

**Comment [E86]:** Requiring response

**Comment [E87]:** Literal reflection

R: So it's: what is it that you enjoy.

P: Oh yeah. I'm enjoying expressing my feeling but not like writing it all down, like drawing it, so that when people look at it they'll be like, "okay I don't understand that." Because, like, I don't really like having mine to show in case anybody does understand what the pictures are meant to mean and stuff.

**Comment [E88]:** Requiring response

**Comment [E89]:** Personal

R: So you'd like to have that chance to express yourself.

P: Yeah.

R: But you want to keep it to yourself?

P: Yeah. So like with really really close friends and stuff I don't mind them knowing, then when it's like people in the other - other people in the school, I'd be a bit like "mmmm no that's mine! Leave it alone!"

**Comment [E90]:** Personal

R: Yeah. So it's something personal as well?

P: Yeah.

R: I'd like to have a bit more of a think about what you might have enjoyed about the assemblies, so I've got lots of words here about things that I think were in the assemblies. And, I started off by saying "pick one," but someone picked three, which were their favourite parts. So can you pick one, or two, or three, and explain why you've picked that one, why it's your favourite part.

P: There's a lot.

R: There are a lot to choose from, so it's not easy.

P: "Space" and "together" do not make a perfect mix but-

**Comment [E91]:** Being unique together

R: But you've chosen them?

P: Yeah! Coz, like, it's nice because when you express your feelings you feel as if there's no-one else there except from you. And then, "together"... I just like being together with friends quite a lot. And...Oh gosh. I can't choose out of these three.

**Comment [E92]:** Personal

**Comment [E93]:** Experiencing community

R: These three. So, if we put those to one side, and we can talk about them in a minute. Can I ask you slightly more about this one? Coz I'm really intrigued by - that you said already, "they don't

quite go together, but they do!”

P: Coz I...

R: Yeah, can you explain a bit more? “Space” and “together”.

R: Coz, like, when I’m drawing I feel as if no-one else is there, even if like everybody’s going like [makes sound of people chatting] and then, on “together”, like, to people I don’t mind telling things to I like telling them, like, what it means and stuff. Coz like, probably if someone did love or something, people would be like “they did love?” Like, coz sometimes people would be like, “Hahaha, love!” but not in that way, so, I think if I did love I’d want to keep it, then, but with together and things like this I’d be more open. So I thought that maybe being together and telling what those are...

**Comment [E94]:** Being unique together

R: Like, would it be the same if you did exactly the same thing but just on your own?

P: I don’t think so because even though I feel as if there’s space, I’d like it if - I wouldn’t like it if it was all silence, like everybody’s [pause] the whole time. It would be a bit like this is frightening.

**Comment [E95]:** Experiencing community

**Comment [E96]:** Feeling scared or nervous

R: Yeah. So, is there something good - so would it be the same if you were the only one on the room doing it? Or is it good that other people are there?

P: Being in the room by myself, coz I wouldn’t be able to be like, “Hello, did you do that? Are you going to Sensei’s house tonight?” to myself and stuff. I don’t know why I’m using Sensei... Yeah, so. Coz talking to myself people’d think I’m a bit loony.

R: Is it good to talk to other people about what you’re thinking?

P: Yeah, coz like, with some people if they’re sad they’re like, “Yeah, I’m alright,” And if they’re at home, they’re probably weeping loads. But I’m not that sort of person. If someone’s like, “Are you alright?” I’d be like “No! I’m not alright!” And stuff. So like, Nina said, to my handwriting, coz she has this book she said that with my handwriting because it’s big it means that I’m happy to express my feelings, than people who have small handwriting like to keep it in to themselves.

R: So do you like expressing your feelings?

P: Yeah. I’m alright with expressing my feelings.

R: And you said like you felt that there was space?

P: Yeah.

R: Can you add anything more to that or is it hard to explain?

P: It’s a bit hard to explain but I’ll do my best.

R: Thankyou.

P: Coz sometimes, sometimes like when, um, when you’re, when I’m writing I feel really squashed up between people because they go like, “Ooh, ooh, ooh, what’s that?” and try to copy. Then with stuff like this they’d be like wanting to do their own things. Like, if they saw...if they saw that I’d done a book, which I’d probably want to do one time, they’d be like “hmmm...no”...

**Comment [E97]:** Work out own beliefs

R: So you felt you had space to do your own thing.

P: Yeah.

R: And everyone did, but that you were - could share if you wanted to?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much. Now you've picked out "Story," "Pebbles," and "Candle." Do you want to tell me a bit about what you liked about those things?

P: Well I'm not certain but on the first one I think you told us to pick a pebble and drop it in. And then on the fourth or third one it reminded me of that Easter thing that St X set up when you had to drop the pebble into the thing, and like, hoping that it's a sin, so that God could get rid of it. So, um, I thought about that and just dropped it in thinking that maybe the thing would disappear. And then, on the candle, I like it when you say "If you're an atheist you might think that..." I forgot what the atheist one is but I know the agnostic one.

Comment [E98]: Sensing the numinous

Comment [E99]: Marked/bounded

R: What's the agnostic one?

P: It might be when the candle flickers you think it's the confusion.

Comment [E100]: Marked/bounded

R: Yeah, it can be, like it's the different things you might think. I can't even remember it very well - you've remembered it brilliantly. So that's the one you remember?

P: Yeah. And then on the story, I just like listening to how people can be really helpful, and kind sometimes. So then it makes me want to be like "Oh I want to do that!" But I never got round to doing things like that. But I think they're like random acts of kindness. Because there's this thing I've heard called "Random acts of kindness," like, I think I told you one when in one of our class assemblies, there was this stray dog and the girl held the water fountain so he could drink from it. Yeah, so...

Comment [E101]: Reconsidering the future

R: It reminds you of those?

P: It makes me think maybe I could do something like that, maybe I could pick starfishes up and put them back in the sea. Even though I haven't seen some starfish in a while.

Comment [E102]: Reconsidering the future

R: Does it have to be starfish?

P: No.

R: What could it be?

P: Well, it could be anything! It could be like, if there's a little stray cat you could take it to a cat thing?

R: Cattery. Cat protection. Lovely. So you like the - if we see if there's anything more you want to add: so you like the story because it made you think of what someone does in real life and what you could do? Yeah? Is there anything else in that?

P: No.



R: No? And with the pebbles, you like the fact that we dropped one in?

P: And thinking that it'd be one of your sins going away.

R: Good. So it's like a sin going away. And that came back to you - or that gave you an idea because of the St X thing? What had it been before that?

P: I can't remember.

R: You hadn't really thought about it?

P: I can't really remember.

R: But it's something of yours that you put there. And you liked the candle because you could remember the different things?

P: And, um, going to the sins again, because I thought there was pebbles around the candle thing, um, well, I think it sounds a bit silly, but I thought of like the pebbles being the sins and the candle in the middle like burning them up so they couldn't come back to you.

**Comment [E103]:** Sensing the numinous

R: No, that's a lovely idea! Yeah. So, the candle's there but can take some of those things away if you want it to? Brilliant. Thank you so much for sharing those. Are there any here that are your - or one that was your least favourite thing?

P: Um...I think this one.

R: You've chosen "stillness."

P: Well, coz, um, sometimes, I think, like I was moving about and someone was like, "Stop it!" So I was like this the whole way through and I was like, "uhhh." And I kept them in like that, so.

R: So holding yourself stiffly.

P: And, I'm a very fidgety person, and you could ask my mummy and she'd say, "Yes, yes, yes she's a fidgety person." So.

R: Do you find it hard to be still?

P: Yeah.

R: So why was that difficult? Was it just difficult because you felt you had to be still and you couldn't fidget?

P: Coz like, if I fidgeted too much I'd probably make some sounds coz I always go like this [taps table] or tap my feet like I'm doing now. So I was just, so to prevent myself doing that I crossed my legs so my feet couldn't tap and I went like that sometimes to stop my hands.

**Comment [E104]:** Feeling scared or nervous

R: So you felt like you couldn't be completely who you usually are because of the tapping maybe?

P: Yeah.

R: Was that a problem for you?

P: Yeah.

R: So, maybe then it would help if there was kind of a sense of stillness but not feeling like you can't fidget.

P: Coz like if it was an emergency or something and they were like, "Everybody stand still!" Like in a doctor emergency, then I'd be sure to stand still. But if you're something like, stand still...

R: So in this case, as well-

P: Yeah, actually I just didn't want to say that coz I thought it'd sound a bit mean.

R: No! No it's fine! Because actually, like, it's stopping you fully - because you're having to concentrate a bit on trying to be still. Is that true?

P: I'm always like that. When music's on I'm like, "Do-do do-do do," and stuff, so.

R: That's really helpful, thank you very much. Okay, right, I'll put the words away. Ah look, it's nearly break time but we might manage the next question. So. I've got some pictures - you've actually remembered a lot about the assemblies already. But I'm going to put four pictures, one that's connected to each of the assemblies we did. And I was wondering if you could pick one and tell me what you remember from it, and maybe what you were thinking or feeling. Let me have that. So. Well if we start with just these pictures and we'll have a look at those in a minute. There we are. So you've told me a bit about the hat anyway, so we might leave that one.

P: Uhuh. And sort of the starfish.

R: Mmm.

P: Um...which one was which? Is this one where that man was looking for God?

R: This was the one where he was looking for God, because it was finding the - up in the mountains. And this was the one where it was Moses and he felt like he couldn't - like, God told him to go and do something and he said, "No! Send someone else."

P: I'm doing that one.

R: You want that one?

P: Yeah.

R: You've remembered it now?

P: Coz, sometimes when, like, in my, when I was doing my tae kwon do grading, um, mum was like, "You can do it Olivia, just do your best!" And I was like, "No!" And I was like, not like, "No! I won't!" I was like, "No, I can't, I'm shaking all over!" - because I'm fidgety - and um, coz I did get really nervous. Luckily I did grade, and well, coz like sometimes, like, when I was in year two, and I saw someone who was bullying someone, I wanted to like stop them and prevent them, and so, um, then, but, um I just felt really hopeless, not like "hopeless", like, useless and stuff. Coz like, on my first day in reception the teacher looked down at me and said "Why don't you take this

**Comment [E105]:** Making connections to understand the past.

to the office?” and I just sat there shaking. I was like, “I can’t! I don’t know the way! I’m useless! I’m useless Olivia!” And she was like, “Oh, okay...Okay, let’s send someone else.” So then, but, since then I’ve changed a bit, and stuff. Like, I can sort of, like, I feel a bit more useful, and I hope I am. Coz, well, when I was little, I mean coz I said if people were getting bullied I just used to shuffle over and people used to call me a scaredy cat and stuff and “useless”. So that’s why in year two I wanted to change, so I changed a bit, and then in year three I went back to being useless, and year four I was like I was in year two, bit more - coz I wasn’t in year one and two here, I was - I started in year three. So, um, I got really scared again and I felt incredibly frightened. Then, now that I’ve been in this school a while I feel like it’s been forever that I’ve been in this school, so, um, I feel, I feel a bit more confident with managing to do stuff.

R: So what did this story make you think?

P: Made me feel - can’t believe I was once like - is that Moses?

R: Yeah.

P: I can’t believe I was once like Moses, and now I’m like this. More confident and stuff.

**Comment [E106]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: Yeah. And did you think that was a good thing?

P: Yeah. Like, in year three we had to write speeches to the school council. So I wanted to do it and I did, and when I realised we had to speak up in front of the whole class I talked to Miss... “Thomas”? Or something?...And so she took me out and she said, “Are you sure you want me to do this Olivia?” And I said “Yes.” So I begged her to rip it up for me so she did. Coz I just got really, really scared, and, yeah. So.

R: And actually you didn’t want to be like that, you wanted to be a bit more confident?

P: Yeah.

R: You nearly chose this one, because we talked about the other ones. What do you remember about this story?

P: In this one? Well, that man was looking for God, and I just thought that that was really tremendously incredible, because for the first hour I’d be like, “No! I give up. I’m never going to find him. Where’s the bus? I want to go back home!” And, but he was like, I’m not sure if he did actually say, but I can imagine in his head he’d be going like, “No, I’m not giving up. He’s my God and I’m searching for him.” So, I just thought, how incredible that he could carry on with such a thing.

**Comment [E107]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: Is that something that you then thought-

P: Yeah. I just thought maybe I shouldn’t give up so much easier. Because I’ve said to quite a lot of teachers in the past, “No, I’m not good at this.” I think I once said to you, “I think I should move down a table,” and stuff. So, I always used to give up quite a lot. And he was just like, “No, no no no, not giving up.” Even if he was tempted to, he probably felt that he shouldn’t.

**Comment [E108]:** Reconsidering the future

R: And was there something you felt that you shouldn’t give up looking for?

P: Yeah. I felt, coz I’ve lost quite a lot of things in the past, so I thought, “Okay, I won’t give up looking for them.” But I don’t want to because they’re in the shed with the spiders.

R: Are there any material things - um non-material things. Because they're kind of things in the world.

P: Non-material things?

R: Were there any, um, things like thoughts or ideas or things that you might have been searching for - a God, or a meaning, that you thought, "Maybe I shouldn't give up."

P: I once - in my head, once I really wanted to search for - coz, in year one I used to be really imaginative, sit down on the bench - once I actually sat and helped on the buddy bench, so for that whole play time a buddy had to play with me. So then I went to the correct bench this time and in my head I was trying - it's a bit silly, this thing, so, I was, I used to pretend that I'd gone into my head, shrunk and gone into my head, and was looking round for how to be more confident, confidence. And I used to believe in God, so I thought that maybe...coz like I used to pretend I had folders in there. So, um, I made a new one up with God in it, so I was a bit like him, and I used to think that I could just open the folder up and he'd be there too. So, sometimes I did attempt to search for God, then when I got back everyone was asking, "Oh! What did you do at play?" That's what our teacher Mrs McGreaves would say, and sometimes I didn't think before I'd speak and I said, "I searched for God!" Everyone looked at me like, "She's a bit of a nutcase..."

**Comment [E109]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: What - did you think about that search with this assembly or has it come to you now?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah.

P: So I was like, "God, help me!" So I used to be really hopeful that I'd be able to find God within the world somewhere.

**Comment [E110]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: And what did you think in this assembly? Did you think...

P: Well I thought, well...I'm not sure I just thought that it was a bit of a coincidence that me and that man sometimes maybe could be a bit the same, except from the fact that he was actually in the real world and I was in my head.

**Comment [E111]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: Yeah. He was looking but it could be similar in a way.

P: Mmhm.

R: And he didn't give up with it. Thank you so much for looking at those. It's break time, so if we just stop for a second.... [break in the interview]

R: That one's going...and....There we go. Lovely. So, we'd looked at the different pictures, so do you want to get your responses from each of the four assemblies - except we've managed to lose one haven't we? So that was the first one, is that the second?

P: Yeah, this is the most recent one.

R: Yeah. And then we had a starfish with a smiley face.

P: Just pretend it's there.

R: Yeah we'll imagine it. There it is. Would you like to pick - could you pick one of them and tell me what your response was about - why you made that response? That one - the second one.

P: Yeah. Well, I can't remember which one it was. I think it was the helping one. Trying to think. What was the second story actually?

R: So it was the one with the hat - helping. So helping.

P: So I was thinking that maybe you could like you could help people be happy and make them think other people are happy. So I've done someone happy, thinking happy, and the person who is thinking happy is thinking happy, and then the person who is thinking thinking happy was thinking thinking thinking happy! So, basically, happiness all over in the world.

**Comment [E112]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So if you think in a happy way and pass - and do something then that'll make someone else happy?

P: Yeah.

R: And it'll just carry on going.

P: Yeah.

R: So the idea is that happiness gets passed through all the world.

P: Yeah.

R: That's a lovely idea. Did you have a think - did you think of something you could do that might make someone happy?

P: I thought maybe...I know this is a silly thought but I thought that I could hand out doughnuts.

**Comment [E113]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Yeah, that would.

P: I don't know why. Especially with Homer Simpson, he'd like them.

R: That's true.

P: Even though he's not real.

R: But the happiness would be passed on there.

P: Mmm. Well. One of these videos was this man and this lady and they're going around giving people free hugs. But I don't think I want to go round giving hugs to different people I don't know. And they were giving out toys to kids and books to kids. And I thought "Oh well I could do something like that." But I'd have to put a mask on so that they don't ever know who I am.

R: Would you want to do it in a hidden way?

P: Yeah.

R: Can you tell me a bit about this picture?

P: Oh this one? Coz, um.

R: The fourth one.

P: I misunderstood and thought that we were meant to do something we hoped? And stuff. Like hoped for? Coz the story was...um...(mumble) looking for God. So I thought that he was hoping to find God so I thought, "well I hope for world peace." And that war would stop and stuff.

**Comment [E114]:** Reconsidering the future

R: And that is something that we might search for and a hope that we might have, like him. And did you think how you could hope and search for it?

P: Um, well, I'm not sure how to make world peace, and stuff, coz I'd have to have like, coz there's loads of people in the world, about 60 billion or something. Maybe more, maybe less. And I just thought that I'd have to have at least half to make the other half like peace and stuff. Coz, like, when my brother use to go like "peace!" at me I used to be like, "world peace!" And we used to make these signs up in class and my teacher got a little cross at me because I drew the world and then I put this. And she was like "Olivia, have you got some explaining?" and I was like, "I don't think so!" So it's like, I used to misunderstand peace, and now I've understood it a bit. And, so I just, it'd be cool to have world peace everywhere. So like, wars to stop, like, well this can't be helped but earthquakes could stop, floods to stop, well we need a little rain because plants need to grow and stuff, just not too much to send us flying. Then hurricanes, tornados and stuff-

**Comment [E115]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Could stop.

P: Yeah!

R: Does that fit in with one of the other assemblies we did do you think as well?

P: Uh...

R: One that's not here maybe?

P: The starfish one? Coz that lady - I forgot. She was...She was helping as well I think. Helping starfish. So, um, my picture. I don't think it's a link to any of the starfish things and stuff. I had a funny thought in my mind thinking that the starfish was happy to be back in there - so then I was inspired to draw that big happy face on there. On the starfish.

R: So it was happy to get back.

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much. Let's pop those to one side. Now, I've got here- because we've talked a bit about spirituality in lessons. And so, there are some different ways that some people understand spirituality. Some people might describe it as the fact that we have a journey through life, and that we are children and then we grow to be adults, and we might go to school, then get a job, have a family. But there's also a spiritual journey where we go up and down with our thoughts and our beliefs and who we are. Some people might describe it as we need food for our body to keep healthy and growing, but we also need food for our soul. So, the other part of who we are.

P: Once, my cousin as coming to sleep over, I don't know why but I was really angry. So then, um, because she was a tiny bit upset, she went and made me some Weetabix, so I ate that and I was like, "mmm" and calmed down.

R: Yeah, but there can be other things that might help us calm down, and not just this sort of food, but other things we could have, or that give us something. And other people might describe it as having an outer self that other people see, and an inner self that we keep hidden and only occasionally might share bits with other people. Is there one of these that makes particular sense to you?

P: This one.

R: The journey. Okay, so let's focus on that idea.

P: I'm just thinking. If we all had one of our own things, I'd probably put stage one, stage two toddler, stage three child, stage four teenager, stage five adult, and...

R: Good. So they're some of the life journey things. And the spiritual journey maybe is what you would think and believe at each of those times as well, and the fact that that changes as well. So, did any of the assemblies, or any part of the assembly kind of help you on your journey? On your spiritual journey?

P: Well, on my spiritual journey, from then, I'd had a bit of an up and down life, then, for the past week, before we had one of these assemblies, I was straight, straight, straight, straight, straight, and then, when I heard these, when I drawing (makes rhythmic noise) like that.

R: So was it going - can you describe what happens when you have those assemblies?

P: Coz like, on the first one, it was a little, coz I didn't know what we planned.

R: Sorry I didn't hear all of that - so on the first one?

P: It was a little, coz I thought "Oh, well, it's probably the first and the last one." The second one was like, okay again, so it went up. So when I've split up the story mountain I'd say, like the journey so I'd probably be wiggly, from there, and then it'd probably be longer and going straight, and then I'd say that on the third one I'd got really into it and enjoyed them, and I enjoyed like I said expressing feelings, so I thought "Okay, well, instead of going straight path - boring Olivia - let's go *helpful* Olivia! Let's go liking starfish Olivia," and stuff. Let's go not giving up and stuff.

Comment [E116]: Requiring response

R: So, you kind of did a wiggle on the path?

P: Yeah

R: At those points - what is that? What would you describe that wiggle to be?

P: Well...

R: What's the thought or the belief?

P: Well, I just thought that's the story mountain. Because - yeah - it's like, baby, child, blah blah blah, but then, yet again, if, like, I just thought that if it was a story that it just goes straight so I thought that these were the excitements in the life and stuff.

R: So excitement?

P: Yeah.

R: And so, the assemblies gave you a time to be excited then?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah? Did they give you a time to do something else as well? Or?...

P: Well it just - like - express your feelings and stuff. And, feeling and thinking that I could help somebody by, like, doing something like the lady, or someone did?

**Comment [E117]:** Requiring response

**Comment [E118]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Yeah. So it helped you see where you could move as well? Thank you very much Olivia. Now one of the final things I've got is I've got a blob tree, which you might have seen before?

P: Bob?

R: Blob tree.

P: Oh is it one of those big trees with the (tries to say word)?

R: It's maybe similar. So I was just wondering, which blob do you think best describes you during the Collective Worship, and can you tell me a bit about why?

P: Mmm...that one or that one.

R: So you've picked two?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah? Can you explain - so - if we - do you want to circle that and we'll have that as the first one?

P: So...this one.

R: Why that one?

P: Well, coz I just feel like, coz, in movies me and my sister choose which character we are, sometimes we fight over who we're gonna be.

R: So it's like choosing characters?

P: So in the stories I like pretending I'm them as well. So like in the starfish one I pretended I was the lady, stepped into her point of view, and thought I'd be like that one. Like sort of standing up and helping starfish, then um after that, after I'd stopped being the lady I felt - I feel - I still feel happy, coz, well, thinking about it, even if I'm not the lady helping the starfish I think it's nice thinking that I could help any type of animal or any type of human doing that. It makes me feel happy and stuff.

**Comment [E119]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: You could do that.

P: Which was my other one? This one?



R: I think it was, yeah.

P: On this one I thought that - coz I've said being together was one of the reasons I like, so I thought, it makes me feel together and stuff, like, I knew I wasn't going to choose one like that. Not lonely. One like that, not angry, and stuff.

**Comment [E120]:** Experiencing community

R: Not someone alone or angry, but - so someone happy, and someone with someone else?

P: Uhuh.

R: Is kind of how you felt. Thank you very much. So, did you like having these assemblies?

P: Yeah.

R: Could you tell me a bit about why?

P: Because... Like I've said that I like space, I like being together, I like expressing my feelings, most of all I like hearing that other people can be really really kind and stuff and, like, I think proudly back to when I've done something like that or my family member's done something like that and you know you're exactly like them, or I've done something exactly like that. And it just makes me feel happy and it makes me enjoy myself. Because on the first one it was the - when was it?

**Comment [E121]:** Being unique together

**Comment [E122]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: The first one was the Moses and being ourselves.

P: Oh yeah. So coz, um, that's made me, so, that was the one about Moses feeling a bit useless and stuff so that made me think, yeah, I used to be like that, but I could change, and I can change a lot like Moses did. so I thought, yeah I could, I just particularly enjoyed that Moses one. And I was like, "ooh, maybe." Because I didn't know that there would be any more and stuff and the Moses one I thought, "Well I'd better make the most of this, I'd better draw a nice picture and stuff."

**Comment [E123]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Thank you. Now, we don't have very much time in school with everything we fit in, do you think they're a good use of time?

P: Yeah. Coz like, sometimes, when I'm feeling in a very very very bad mood, thinking that class assembly will be something like literacy - coz I enjoy literacy, but if I have too much in a day I get really stressed when I get home I just stand up on the sofa and I'm like - down.

R: You collapse on the sofa?

P: Yeah.

R: So did it give you some time?

P: Yeah. So it gives me time to just sort of calm down and stuff. So like, I don't like stillness very much and the silence is scary - makes me very - because it reminds me of the empty child from a doctor who show, so then, um, then, I just - but sometimes it's nice to just have a little quiet after you've just been into lunch and everyone's chatting and doing a lesson, everybody's shouting - oh my gosh I've got to practice my words! Yeah. shouting.

**Comment [E124]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

**Comment [E125]:** Time to think

R: That kind of calm and peace?

P: Yeah, so. Like, coz, Mr Z, when we were doing the big write, he used to put peaceful music on and put this picture of a candle up on the board. And when we got used to it he got real candles, so this gave me a moment to sort of calm down and stuff.

R: Similar time. So if you could only keep one thing, what would it be?

P: Only keep?

R: Mmm. From the class assemblies we've done. If you could only keep one thing.

P: Probably...I know I've said that I think the fires burning the sins sometimes when you put that thing on top of the fire, I think that that's everybody's sins when you put them on the top, is like - pfff!

R: They're all gone.

P: So I'd probably not get rid of that.

Comment [E126]: Marked/bounded

R: So you like the ending?

P: Yeah.

R: Where we put out the candle?

P: But sometimes I don't like the ending coz I enjoy the class assemblies so I'm like, "No! Let me go back in time!"

R: Let's do it again.

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you. and I have to send you home!

P: Yeah.

R: Lovely. Thank you so much Olivia.

*Interview 5: Daniel (Christian)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: I've also got to watch out that it doesn't go off because, it's got a low battery. There we go, they're both going. What lesson were you just having?

P: Topics.

R: Topic.

P: We were finishing off our script.

R: Are you nearly there?

P: No.

R: Do you think you might get there at any point?

P: I don't know.

R: Well we can see where we get to this week. And what did you have for breakfast this morning?

P: Mmmm...toast.

R: Did you have anything on it?

P: I just had some butter with it.

R: Ah, that's good, a classic. Did the butter melt in?

P: Yeah.

R: I had rice crispies, so I think you've topped me. Melted in butter on toast, mmm. Now I was wanting to ask a bit about the different class assemblies we've had over the last four weeks. I was just wondering, have you noticed anything about them?

P: Yeah, that they've got like, an [unusual??] lesson because you can share your feelings and it's just like quiet time, and there's not like another, like all the other lessons.

**Comment [E127]:** Share ideas

**Comment [E128]:** Time to think

**Comment [E129]:** No other time

R: So it's not like another lesson we've had. Is it like anything we had before?

P: Not really, because the other time we were looking at other people's...and how they believe, and now we're kind of looking at like what we believe and...more kind of that way.

**Comment [E130]:** Work out own beliefs

R: Yeah. A couple of times we read a story. Someone mentioned that we had pictures of - had a clip of a penguin, or a huddle of penguins at one point. Do you think it's the same as those or do you think it's a bit different?

P: I think it's a bit different because the stories are different, because...I can't really know how to explain it, I just think they're different than the stories we did have in RE.

R: Okay. And what about in the previous class assemblies? Were they - is it being done in a

different way or is it being - or was it using some of the same things some different things?

P: I think it's done in a different way because we light a candle and we put all our favourite kind of stones in and we always have the candle lit and our favourite stones at the time, and it's just a nice time and it's a lot different than any other Re assembly - class assembly.

**Comment [E131]:** Marked/bounded

**Comment [E132]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: Any of the class assemblies we had. Is it different from the assemblies in the hall?

P: Err yeah. A lot different because you still have the candle and everything but it's just a different time where you can share what you feel and you get to write on the piece of papers and...yeah...it's just...

**Comment [E133]:** Share ideas

R: So even though there's - so you said there's still a candle; is the candle the same do you think or is it different?

P: I think it's...the same, but, yeah it's the same, but I think it is different in a way but it's the same, but I don't really know how to explain it.

R: So in a way it's the same but there's something that's slightly different?

P: Yeah.

R: But you're not sure what it is. Is it, um, how the candle is lit? Or is it...

P: I think it's how the candle is put out because in assembly you just blow out the candle and you can't really see the smoke properly when it goes out. But when you put that thing over it - I don't know what it's called -

**Comment [E134]:** Marked/bounded

R: The "snuffer" or something.

P: And all the smoke comes out you can watch it and it's a good thing to look at when it comes out.

**Comment [E135]:** Sensing the numinous

R: Why do you like looking at it?

P: Because...you're looking at the light - at the flickering of the candle, and then when you put it out it's like, it's like it's all, it's like - I don't really know how to explain it.

R: You were getting close; have a go.

P: Like when the smoke comes out, when the fire goes out, it's...I'm not really sure how to explain it.

R: Yeah, something's gone out, but you can still see the smoke.

P: Yeah.

R: So is there a meaning in that, do you think, for you? Or...

P: Yeah, that, even though you can't see the flickering light any more it's still there. The smoke is like the flickering light.

**Comment [E136]:** Sensing the numinous

R: Yeah, the smoke becomes like it.

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you Daniel, that's a really thoughtful response. And you've got there haven't you? Kind of. That's a hard thing. Now, I've got some words, which I think are maybe things that were part of some or all of the class assemblies we had, and I was wondering if you could pick one which you think is about your favourite part, and explain why you've picked it. Now some people have ended up picking more than one, so if you need to pick more than one that's fine too. Your favourite part.

P: I think the pebbles.

R: Can you explain why?

P: Because everyone got to pick their favourite and it's a good time, because...because someone else don't get to pick it for you, like, you get to put that one in. You get to have a good look around and you get to have a look at the one you really like, so...that's what I like about the pebbles.

**Comment [E137]:** Think for yourself

R: Good. Is there - so you really liked the picking moment. Do you - because we only did that the first time, did you still like them?

P: Yeah. Because I think yesterday you said, "Look at something and don't catch anyone's eye," and I looked at the pebble what I chose in the bowl and I thought that was really nice.

**Comment [E138]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: So you picked the one that you'd chosen?

P: Yeah.

R: And that was a chance to think - did you feel that the pebbles had a meaning? Or, um, was it just good to have?

P: I just think it was something good to have because you put it in there and it's your pebble - it's kind of like your pebble that you picked and not anyone else's, so it's good.

**Comment [E139]:** Think for yourself

R: Yeah. And everyone else could have picked theirs. Thank you Daniel. And is there another one you'd like to tell me about? That's a favourite?

P: Yeah, I like "space."

R: Okay, can you tell me a bit about "space"?

P: It was really interesting. Like, you don't really learn about stuff, like, I've never learnt about space before and it was really interesting for me to learn about space, because I didn't know nothing at all, and now I know a lot about space and I found it really interesting.

R: So we've done about space, as in the solar system, and the earth and planets and things in our, in our science work haven't we? Did that - um, so was that an important part of the Collective Worship as well? How was it involved?

P: I'm not too sure how it was involved.

R: That was another thing you'd enjoyed. Is there another sort of space as well?

P: I'll have a think really, to me. (??)

R: No? But it was amazing to find out about space and things?

P: Yeah.

R: Well, thank you very much Daniel. It's really interesting, isn't it, the different things that we can find out. Is there a least favourite thing here?

P: I kind of like everything here. I didn't mind any of these things.

R: Is there anything that's not here that you didn't like?

P: No. I really enjoyed the class assemblies.

R: You really enjoyed them. So there wasn't a least favourite bit? Why did you enjoy them?

P: It's just a time where you can just spend time as a class and you get to be together, not as a whole school. You get to spend a lot of time as a class, just kind of being quiet and stuff on some of them and then during the other ones you get to be loud, and it's fun, and I think it's just time - I think it's good to be a class and share times like that.

**Comment [E140]:** Experiencing community

**Comment [E141]:** Experiencing community

**Comment [E142]:** Experiencing community

R: So, even though we spend a lot of time as a class, there's something different about that time?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much. Now, I've got four pictures that are connected to the assemblies that we had. So that was the first assembly, that was the second, the third and the fourth. Could you pick one of the pictures and tell me a bit about that assembly. Maybe what we did in the assembly, or what you thought about, or how you felt?

P: This one.

R: So you've picked the starfish.

P: Yeah.

R: Can you tell me a bit about it?

P: Well, it was this little girl who was living near a beach and she found lots of starfish dried up on the sand, and she wanted to help them and...I'm not too sure if it was her grandfather or a man, he thought, "she'll never be able to help them but she's got good thinking." But she helped a lot of the starfish and I think - and, but she didn't help them all but she felt gutted that she couldn't help them all. But I thought that was good because she tried to help, and stuff, like some of them, and she didn't just leave them.

**Comment [E143]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: And did it make you think of anything when you heard the story?

P: Yeah. If you think yourself thinking you want to help you don't have to be scared not to help. You can help them.

**Comment [E144]:** Reconsidering the future

R: And how did that make you feel? To think that?

**Comment [E145]:** Reconsidering the future

P: I felt quite good. I felt quite proud of myself.

R: Yeah. Proud you could do something?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much Daniel. Can I ask you what you might remember about this assembly? Which is the one we had yesterday. And this is from the very end. So we had someone called Elijah, can you remember anything about it?

P: Umm...yeah, I remember a little bit about it. I think I remember the start of it. I don't think I remember that bit of it.

R: You don't remember the story? Or...

P: I remember, like, I remember...I can't...

R: Do you remember what Elijah was doing? It was quite a hard time wasn't it? We were all exhausted after the talent show. Do you remember what he was trying to do?

P: I can't really remember what he was trying to do because I can't remember the story that well.

R: So I think, it was to do with - he was up in the mountains and he was searching, and he searched in lots of different places, and then he maybe found what he was looking for in one place. Do you remember what he was searching for?

P: Umm...no.

R: Don't worry about it, I think we were all very tired. Okay. So, we've got a couple of your responses but we seem to have lost two of them. But if you remember them then you could talk about them as well. Would you be able to pick one of them and tell me a bit about why you made that response?

P: Yeah, I pick this one.

R: That's from the first one.

P: Yeah, because, it was something, I was - I wanted to, like, it was something I was searching for, and...it was just all the things that I liked. And I built a place like my bedroom and that's what I made, so, because that's the thing that I like to... do stuff, and...do the things I like to do in my room, so that's why I drew a picture of that.

**Comment [E146]:** Literal reflection

R: So they're the things that made you - made you feel who you were, and that you like doing?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much. We've got lots of things about you - you like Man United and things. And then this one is from the final session but it all seems a bit of a blur. Do you remember what you drew?

P: Yeah. I drew a man searching.

R: The man searching?

P: Yeah, because I remembered the searching part of it and I thought, it's good to search for stuff you want. And I think you will eventually get what you're searching for if you really try as hard as you can and don't stop. And, that's how I felt, what you should do.

**Comment [E147]:** Reconsidering the future

R: And was there anything that you felt that you were searching for at that time? Or were you just thinking about the search?

P: Yeah, I was just thinking about the search. Because I haven't been searching for something yet but I think it will come across me, and I think that I should not...should not, like, stop. I should just keep searching until I find it.

**Comment [E148]:** Reconsidering the future

R: And is there - what do you think you might end up searching for? In your life?

P: I'm not too sure. Because I'm not quite at that age yet that I know what I'm going to be searching for, so...

R: But you just think you will be?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much Daniel. Now, we've done some work on spirituality in our RE lessons, and I've got some different descriptions of what people think it could - people could say it was. So some people say it is a bit like we have a life journey, so we start off young and we have to become - we become an older child, and then an adult, we might get a job and get a family and carry on going. And some people might say we also have a spiritual journey which is about how our thoughts and our beliefs also grow and move, as we do as people. Some people say that it's a bit like we have food for our bodies to keep us healthy, to keep us growing, but also food - a different sort of food for the soul. So things that we might need for who we are, not just our bodies. And some people might say that we have an outer self that everyone sees and an inner self that we often keep hidden and only share sometimes. Is there one of these descriptions that makes most sense to you?

P: I think this one.

R: The journey?

P: Yeah.

R: Why that one?

P: Because...it's always going to be a journey through your life, and there's going to be ups and down moments of your life, and you will grow older and older...and I like the picture of that one where he's going up a mountain, and, he's like, looking up. And sometimes I think, "what am I going to be when I'm older?" And that's almost like me looking up at a mountain. Saying, "what will it be up there?"

R: Yeah. What will it be, what will the road be like?

P: Yeah.



R: So are there any - did any of the assemblies or any part of the assembly help you to do that looking up, or to look at the road and see where you were going on your spiritual journey?

P: Yeah. When you said the flickering light of the...fire of the candle. That made me think of, made me think of, like "what could it - what's it going to be when I'm older?" And it don't have nothing to do with it, but it just made me - it just helped me think a lot for the flickering light.

**Comment [E149]:** Reconsidering the future

**Comment [E150]:** Sensing the numinous

R: So the idea of the flickering light?

P: Yeah.

R: Helps you to think of what's going to happen, because it's not yet certain?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah, I can imagine that might do. Was there any other part that might have done? Or was that...

P: I think it's only the candle what made me think of what it's going to be like when I'm older.

R: And where you're going.

P: Yeah.

R: That's good. Did any of the stories we had make you think of anything you were doing on the way?

P: Um...I don't think they did but I think they helped me with other stuff but not what I'm going to think when I'm going to be older.

R: Not your kind of - yeah. What other stuff did they help you with?

P: Like, the boy with the hat, when he gave it to the milkman. Because the boy thought that the milkman didn't like his hat, but really he did, and he gave it to something what the milkman found special to him. And then the boy felt that it was special that the milkman gave it to the puppy to sleep in.

R: Yeah, to keep him safe. So, you said that was something that helped you. How did that help you?

P: Well, like if you give something to someone and if they don't like it, it's, you might - it might not just be that they don't like it, it might be that they don't want to wear it at the time, but they really do like it. So I thought I should never really believe that and I think people should take gifts like that, like, special, even though the milkman did give it to something like a puppy, and I thought that was special to him, the puppy.

**Comment [E151]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: So, giving something special, it sometimes falls to someone else who's special?

P: Yeah.

R: So did it help you think about something you could do in your life?

P: Well, yeah. **If I could give something to someone it could really help them out sometimes.** If they're going through a bad time as well, because, the milkman was really wet and cold so he got a hat to help him through that time.

**Comment [E152]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Yeah, and I wonder if those are a bit like some of that path with the twist and turns there? Something that we do and think because, like, do you think that you're on the path at the moment, or do you think that you're just looking at the path ahead?

P: I think I might be at the beginning of the path.

R: You're at the beginning of the path?

P: I think there's a lot more of my life left to come, and I'm looking forward to knowing what's to come.

R: Yeah, and the things that you'll learn and things. So I've got here, it's called a blob tree. Lots of different blobs on. I was just wondering, which of the blobs do you think best describes you during the Collective Worship? And could you tell me why you've picked that one?

P: I think....maybe...I think this one, because-

R: Which one? Is it the one on the-

P: I think - I don't know out of one of them three, but...

R: So it's those three together?

P: Yeah.

R: Okay.

P: **It's kind of made me be with my friends more,** because...It just makes me be with my friends more and I also think I'm this one, climbing up the tree, for more things to come, and **more things to get taught in class assemblies.**

**Comment [E153]:** Experiencing community

**Comment [E154]:** Learn about ideas/beliefs

R: To pick up. So if we just look at those together - well let's look at this one first. So you've picked out these three people who are there, and you've said it helps you be with your friends more. If we didn't have the class assemblies you'd still be with your friends, so what's different about the class assemblies helping you be with them more?

P: Because it makes me think about if, maybe if they had to go somewhere one day, and if I never see them again, and class assemblies made me think more about my friends and... just more about my friends.

R: So it helps you think about them more?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you think that you could do that if you were just on your own somewhere? So if you just had some quiet time, and you'd said you'd think about your friends, or, would that - or is there something better about class assemblies for thinking about that?

P: I don't think I've - if I was just by myself I don't think I'd really think about me and my friends. I think class assemblies really made me think about my friends. And caring for others as well, and just not people who's not your friends, you can still care for others.

**Comment [E155]:** Experiencing community

**Comment [E156]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So it's made you think about caring for other people, in particular your friends. And then this one is quite interesting, then, so, explain this one again? Are you the one climbing up?

P: Yeah. I've kind of got things to come in, where, I'm going to get taught in class assembly.

R: Do you think they're things that, um, I teach you? Are they things that you think? Are they things that you learn?

P: I think, what you teach me, because spirituality, we've learnt about that and we went on, then we went on the Collective Worship, and I think both of them was quite interesting and the next thing we go on, I think I will learn more in class assembly in that kind of way.

R: What sort of things are you learning?

P: Like, different - in spirituality, different beliefs, and, how different people believe stuff. And in Collective Worship it's just some quiet time and you get to think to yourself.

**Comment [E157]:** Learn about ideas/beliefs

**Comment [E158]:** Time to think

**Comment [E159]:** Think for yourself

R: So it's time for thinking about your own beliefs?

P: Yeah.

R: So that's giving you the chance to think about your own, and you think there's a lot further you've got to go?

P: Mmm.

R: Who's this then?

P: I'm not too sure who that is, I think I was just climbing up the tree.

R: So, it's without that person?

P: Yeah

R: Just climbing up as you're going?

P: But I'm hoping to get to that place.

R: What do you think it would be like there? What is it at the top of the tree?

P: I think, more understanding and stuff. I think more better, and you learn more stuff than you already do now.

**Comment [E160]:** Learn about ideas/beliefs

R: With it being a Collective Worship, is there a sense of - what is it do you think that you're wanting to understand and that you'd get?

P: More about myself really, because I don't really know what I want to do or nothing, and I think

it's a bit - no - Collective Worship is kind of helping me know who I am more.

**Comment [E161]:** Work out own beliefs

R: And is that in relation to anyone? Or is - So it's helping you to learn more who you are, is it helping you to learn about anything else?

P: I think it's just helping me to be who I am - more to be who I am more and know who I am more.

**Comment [E162]:** Think for yourself

**Comment [E163]:** Sensing the numinous

R: Thank you very much Daniel. So, overall, did you like having these assemblies?

P: Yeah.

R: And why or why not?

P: I think I did like them, because there's something different than what Miss X's assembly, because she does - she does like different things like Easter and stories and stuff like that, but in class assemblies you get - you just do different stories, and they're not the same stories, and I think it's good to, you know, different stuff from normal assemblies.

**Comment [E164]:** Learn about ideas/beliefs

R: What are the different stories? How are they different?

P: Easter stories and Christmas stories are more about - kind of Jesus and stuff. And in class assembly you get to learn more about different beliefs and - and they're just a lot different stories.

**Comment [E165]:** Learn about ideas/beliefs

R: Would - do you think it's - so you think it's good to have the different, these different beliefs, these different stories, and not all Christian stories?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah. Do you think, um, do you - I've forgotten. Don't worry about it. So we don't have much time in school. Do you think they're a good use of our time? To have class assemblies?

P: Yeah. Because I think we have got a bit of time to think, like in spare time I think we should do more of class assemblies, because it helps you learn more than - like, learning about different like lots of things or something (?) I think class assemblies are more better because you get to think about yourself more.

**Comment [E166]:** Time to think

**Comment [E167]:** Learn about ideas/beliefs

**Comment [E168]:** Think for yourself

R: Yeah, your own thoughts and beliefs. Did it help you think about your beliefs, as well as about you as a person?

P: Sometimes, I think, because you spoke about different beliefs and I thought of my belief and I think that... I should take it more seriously. Because different people take their, like muslims, they take their belief really seriously, and I look up to some of my friends and they take it really seriously. And I don't take it as seriously as them, so I think I should take my belief more seriously.

**Comment [E169]:** Reconsidering the future

**Comment [E170]:** Experience different beliefs

R: Did it help support your beliefs? Or was it a bit different to your other beliefs?

P: I think it helped support my belief, because you got to learn more about it and how good it is to have a belief. And that's how I thought it supported how - it supported my belief.

**Comment [E171]:** Work out own beliefs

R: Thank you. So, if you could only keep one thing from the class worship we did, what would it

be?

P: I think the pebbles, because they really meant a lot, after class assemblies, because they really meant you got to look at them and I like to - all, like look at them, in the class assemblies, and I really enjoyed having a look at different ones what my friends liked, what other peoples liked.

R: Yeah.

P: Yeah.

R: And it reminded you of those things?

P: Yeah.

R: You don't have to answer this question, its not on my sheet, it's just an extra one, did - were you able to think about God when you were doing it, with your beliefs? Or, were you more thinking about yourself? I'm just interested really, whether...

P: I'm not too sure.

R: Because I know that you've sometimes gone and been to church when you've remembered your granddad and things like that. Were they quite different - well, they are going to be different times anyway. But, like, is being in a church different from being in a class assembly do you think?

P: Yeah, because, churches are like more different things than the class assembly, and different stories and, it's just a lot different.

R: Yeah, so it does seem very different. Thank you so much Daniel, particularly for suddenly throwing in a random question at the end. I'll just stop these.



*Interview 6: Yasir (Other Faith)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: Great, so, how are you doing today?

P: Good.

R: Are you feeling the pollution or is it okay?

P: It's okay.

R: Okay good. What did you have for breakfast this morning?

P: Something...cereal.

R: Some cereal? Which cereal?

P: Coco pops.

R: Coco pops. Someone else had coco pops. I only had rice crispies. No chocolate, terrible! Do you like the milk when it goes chocolatey?

P: Yeah.

R: I see. That was the same as someone else. And what lesson were you just having? It was just registration wasn't it?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you know what's coming afterwards?

P: Science.

R: Science. Do you like science?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah. I think they're learning about the moon, so if there's a bit that you miss I'll make sure that we see - because there's going to be a phase of the moon rap, so I'll make sure we watch it tomorrow if you miss it. So, we've had some different class assemblies in the last few weeks and I was just wondering if you'd noticed anything?

P: They're all really...you have like a chance to think about...uh...everyone has a chance to think about what they want about like, earth, and what they think about it.

**Comment [E172]:** Think for yourself

**Comment [E173R172]:** Time to think

R: So everyone has their own chance to think about it. Good. Is there anything that you think has been different?

P: Well...now we have like, kind of like religious stories, like Christian and Jewish, but you can still think about it in your own way.

**Comment [E174]:** Think for yourself

R: Can you tell me a bit more about that?

P: So...they're more kind of towards prophets and religion, that we talk about.

R: So we looked at some of the prophets from something.

P: Yeah. And we think about it our own way. So.

R: How do you think about it in your own way?

P: Compare it to my prophet or think calm and peaceful. I don't know.

R: Okay, so you could either choose to compare it to something in your religion or you could just be calm and peaceful.

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah. And, so did you feel that you could think about the stories from your own religion?

P: Yeah, because they all have like a key thing about...so, yeah.

R: So you could think about the key point?

P: Yeah.

R: And how that applies to you. Thank you, that's really interesting. Is there anything else that you noticed that's different?

P: Not really. I think it's all, like, sharing kind of. Yeah. They're all kind of sharing.

R: What is it and who is it that's sharing?

P: Like, the people who went out. So like...and they're helping looking, and stuff like that.

R: So in the stories.

P: Yeah.

R: There are some themes, one of which might be sharing?

P: Yeah.

R: Is that what you're saying?

P: Yeah.

R: Or is it sharing with the people in the assembly?

P: It's the theme.

R: The theme of them.

**Comment [E175]:** Think for yourself

**Comment [E176]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

**Comment [E177]:** Learn from ideas/beliefs

**Comment [E178]:** Share ideas



P: So it's kind of like good things.

R: So there was a lot of thinking about good things. Thank you. Now, I've got some words here, which are - I can pick them up - which I think are the things - some of the things that were in the Collective Worships that we've had. So I was just wondering, if you have a look at them and if you could pick one - though I say "one" - some people picked more than one - that was their favourite part of the four Collective Worships we had.

P: Well...I think "together."

R: Together.

P: Yeah.

R: Can you explain why you've chosen that word?

P: "Together." Because if you were like lonely and thinking, you just feel lonely and you don't think about that much, but when you've got other people around that boosts your confidence up about thinking, so you can see what they're kind of doing.

**Comment [E179]:** Think together

R: So it was helpful to hear other people's thoughts?

P: Yeah. Because when they put their hand up then you can relate to what you think.

**Comment [E180]:** Experience different ideas

R: So when people were thinking about their ideas and their response to something, you could then think what yours was and it helped. Was there something else - so I'm intrigued that you've picked "together," because in some - because you're not always in the assemblies that we have in the hall with the whole school.

P: So not really that much "together," but when you're together it feels more better, and just about five people with you, so we can all think together.

**Comment [E181]:** Think together

R: So is that something that you would like to have?

P: Yeah.

R: Do you think that it is good to be able to do that as a school as well as a class?

P: Yeah. So, it's good to think together, instead of someone else going in assembly and if you're out of assembly then you don't really...well sometimes you can think but you want to think, like, there's one key thing and people want to think, kind of, not the same but different.

**Comment [E182]:** Inclusive

**Comment [E183]:** Work out own beliefs

R: But it's nice to know what the point was, for you to then think about?

P: Yeah.

R: Is there another word that you think is - describes one of your favourite parts?

P: The candle. "Candle."

R: "Candle." Tell me a bit more about that?

P: Because when you just start looking at the candle, it kind of makes you think more. So. Makes you think about, like how can that happen, like, when we're looking for stories I just look at a candle and think about stories because it helps me, so I think the candle is important.

**Comment [E184]:** Marked/bounded

**Comment [E185]:** Marked/bounded

R: So you say it helps you to look at the candle when you're thinking about a story?

P: Yeah.

R: How does it help you?

P: Well, it's calm and it's kind of, um - it just helps me think somehow, I don't know.

**Comment [E186]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: Does it make you - um, so it's calm. Does it make you think of anything in particular? Or does it just make you think?

P: It just makes me think. Yeah. About the stories, and, yeah.

**Comment [E187]:** Time to think

R: Thank you. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about? That's a really good thing, a favourite thing?

P: No, not really. Actually, maybe the pebbles.

R: Maybe the pebbles?

P: Yeah. So, when you got to pick one. So if you picked one you just think, about like how you have an individual like pebble that you like. I think that's nice. In the middle of the candle.

**Comment [E188]:** Think for yourself

R: What's nice about that?

P: Well, it makes me think about when you put the pebbles on, like, near, around the candle. It's because I - it makes me feel that they are us, the pebbles and we're like looking at the candle. So yeah, it's quite together.

**Comment [E189]:** Experiencing community

R: So we're together around the candle? What would the candle be, if the pebbles are us?

P: Something special maybe.

**Comment [E190]:** Sensing something numinous

R: Is there something special it would be for you, or is it just the sense that it's something special?

P: Sense.

R: Thank you. Is there something that was a least favourite?

P: "Ending."

R: Ending.

P: Because I really didn't want to end it because it was fun.

R: What was fun about it?

P: Like, the main bit of the story and everything, but then, when we end it, but because I really

want to hear more about it but we end it, so.

R: So do you want to hear more about the story?

P: Yeah, together. It's kind of ending, so.

R: Yeah, there's something about the fact that we're then-

P: Not together.

R: Not together as well.

P: Yeah.

R: And, so would you have liked them to have been longer, or do you think the ending would still be your least favourite part?

P: Maybe not longer, because, I think we have enough time to think. But when it's the ending, still alright, but it's still my least favourite part.

R: There's that sense that it's finished.

P: Yeah but you always have to end something.

R: Yeah, otherwise you wouldn't start it again. Thank you very much [wrong name.]. I said [wrong name], I have no idea why: my brain is mush now, Yasir. Oh dear. You'd have thought I'd have got it after several months. Okay, right. So, I've now got a picture that's connected to each of the assemblies that we had. So that's the first, the second, the third and the fourth. Could you pick one and tell me a bit about that assembly? Maybe what we did, what we heard, what you thought about, what you felt?

P: Well, the last one with the mountains, where this man tried to look for God everywhere, and he tried to look in places like in the mountains, the fire, but actually, they looked there - he looked there but because it wasn't calm he wasn't - God wasn't there. But he finally found him in like this cave, in this calm place, and God whispered to him and maybe that's the part when he realised that God is always going to be in a calm place.

R: That that's where we can find God?

P: Yeah. **Because a calm place is a really good place.**

**Comment [E191]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: And - So that was the story - did it make you think about anything?

P: Maybe not always like to...not to be loud. **Just to be calm and patient for things.**

**Comment [E192]:** Reconsidering the future

R: And did it make you think, or do you think that, um, that that's a time when you might find God or does it, does it resonate with that? That's not a very good word. Did it make you think about yourself or just about Elijah?

P: Well, kind of myself, but, yeah.

R: Yeah. And how did you feel during that assembly?

P: I felt kind of calm. yeah. And, like, just kept on wondering about what, like why wasn't he in those places. But then because it was at the end and I realised God likes calm places.

**Comment [E193]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

**Comment [E194]:** Learn from beliefs/ideas

R: Yeah, and I mean I wondered if it's that, um...that was a place where Elijah found it easier to find God as well, rather than, um, God finding us. I don't know. I don't know what you thought. Did it seem - so you were wondering all the way through.

P: Yeah.

R: Why he wasn't able to find God.

P: Yeah but then at the end he found him in a calm place and it made sense.

**Comment [E195]:** Learn from beliefs/ideas

R: Did it make sense for you and what you think?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you. So if we pop - would you like to tell me about another one?

P: Maybe the star one.

R: The star one.

P: I think that was really nice because, well, there was, um I don't know, there was like this person who found the stars and kept on throwing them into the sea because he really didn't want the stars to die out. And then there was this guy saying that it doesn't make a difference, but then when the other person threw the star into the sea he, um, he said that that star made a difference. So then maybe I thought that at the end maybe like that man would help to do the stars and thought, "I should have said that," because he regret that he said that. Because he wasn't thinking properly. But then when he thought about it I thought he was going to help him or something.

**Comment [E196]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: So he'd realised that he could help them.

P: Yeah.

R: So do you think that - which character did you think you were like? I don't know. Or did you - did you think about yourself with that and what you would do?

P: Maybe I was that, like, thing throwing the animals into the um sea because I wouldn't want any animal to die out because they're just, they're nature and I don't want nature to die out.

**Comment [E197]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So it made you think about lots.

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much. You remembered a lot about those ones. So if I just pop those to one side now, and then do you want to get your own responses?

P: Yeah.

R: I think the star one was missing but we've got the first, the second and the final.

P: Yeah.

R: Could you - could you pick one and tell me why you made that response?

P: Well the last one, when that man was finding a mountain, well, I found a secret desert where I was on this like calm place with sea.

R: So this was a calm place?

P: Yeah.

R: And why did you find that place?

P: Because, like, on the sea, in an island it would be quite quiet and other places it wouldn't. So I thought an island is quiet because, and I'm the only one there. But then I thought that maybe someone could come with me, like a friend or family could come and visit.

R: Yeah, you wouldn't have to be fully alone there?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much. Do you think that you would be alone, even if a family and friend didn't come and visit?

P: Yeah.

R: You would be alone.

P: Actually probably not because I could have a pet animal into the sea.

R: The world would be there as well, and things like that. And it looks like a nice sunny place to be as well.

P: Yeah.

R: Calm and sunny. Could you tell me a little bit about this one? Would you mind?

P: Yeah. Well, I thought that, like, I put my name in it because, well, my pattern - I found my pattern quite interesting, it looked really nice and I thought I might as well.

R: So you drew a pattern and it's in a hand.

P: Yeah.

R: What was - What's the idea behind that? Or the thought, or-

P: Like, um, the patterns were really nice and, like, the, you believe that you're - you're nice, so if you're nice your body's nice. Yeah so I drew my hand and then pattern.

R: So it was yourself and it was reflecting that.

P: Mmm.

R: That kind of, you were nice as well.

P: Mmm.

R: That's lovely. Would you like to tell me about the third?

P: Yeah. Um, so **this one is about sharing**. So, this guy is giving a game to someone because he really wanted it and he didn't get it for his birthday, and, and um, he really wanted it and he felt sorry for that man and gave him the game, and now he's happy.

**Comment [E198]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: So are they both now happy?

P: Yeah.

R: Because they shared it.

P: Yeah.

R: What do you think would happen to the game after that?

P: Maybe they'll both be playing on that game together maybe. That they would invite him to his house and they'll play, like, with each other.

R: Yeah so maybe they'd then-

P: Play with each other.

R: Play together. That'd be a lovely thing. Thank you very much for sharing those. If we just pop them to the side. So we've been thinking about spirituality in RE, and I've got here three different ways that sometimes people think about spirituality. So the first one is that we have a life journey where we travel along and we grow older and we might get a job, and have a family, and all those stages of life. But we also have a spiritual journey which is how inside we kind of develop and how our faith grows. Some people might think of it as food for the body, so we need this food for the body but we also need a form of food, not food like this, for our soul, for what's inside. And some people might think of there being an outer self that people see, and an inner self that we keep to ourselves and only share sometimes. Does one of these make more sense to you?

P: Maybe the life journey and spiritual...

R: So the journey.

P: Yeah.

R: And the fact we're on a spiritual journey as well. So if we take that example, do you think the assemblies or any part of the assembly we had helped you to develop on your spiritual journey? That was a turn in it or a - an up or a down or-

P: Yeah, because **I learnt quite a lot about different people and what they done, even though it was Christian and Jews**, so, yeah.

**Comment [E199]:** Learn about ideas/beliefs

R: So how-

P: I learnt a lot about them, so.

R: How did that help your spiritual journey do you think?

P: Because it makes me know more things and makes me grow.

**Comment [E200]:** Learn from ideas/beliefs

R: So having-

P: My brain grows.

R: So have that awareness helped you to develop your own maybe? Good, were there any points at which it felt like, was a - was an up or was a down as well?

P: Um...Maybe...actually no. Well most of them were up, so.

R: Most of them were up. Why would they go up?

P: Because it just makes you think, and like none of them really doesn't make you think. Unless you weren't paying attention, but.

**Comment [E201]:** Think for yourself

R: So it was the chance to think that was important?

P: Mmm.

R: Thank you very much. So the final - one of the final things I've got - the final thing I've got, not quite the final question, is here's a blob tree.

P: Yeah.

R: Lots of blobs on. Which blob do you think best describes you during the Collective Worship and can you explain - so can you choose one and explain why you've chosen that one?

P: Maybe the one swinging on the tree there?

R: That one? Why have you chosen that one?

P: Well maybe because its - because he's - I'm here now. So, basically, before class assembly I didn't know much about what we learnt, and I'm swinging forwards so I can increase my learning about what happened.

**Comment [E202]:** Learn from ideas/beliefs

R: Do you think it increased - I like the swinging forward - do you think it increased your knowledge or your own faith?

P: Yeah. Maybe my knowledge but probably not my faith, but maybe, I'm not quite sure.

**Comment [E203]:** Learn from ideas/beliefs

R: It's hard isn't it, when there's different things. Did it - did you feel you had time to - to think or pray or be yourself, or did you find you were mainly thinking about something else?

P: Mainly thinking about something else, but sometimes it made me think about stuff, yeah.

**Comment [E204]:** Work out own beliefs

R: So occasionally there were moments but most of the time you were thinking about things from the perspective of swinging forwards. Where do you think you'd end up if we carried on, because you said this was the start of the assemblies. Would you carry on swinging, or would you go somewhere else?

P: Well maybe I'd swing and I'd land up there. And now I'm up here but now its ended, so I'm going to stay here, and maybe if you have another class assembly I might climb up here, and jump on there and stop there.

R: So you think you'd stop in the middle?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah? Why do you think you'd stop in the middle?

P: Because I already know a bit about it, but not like that much, so now I've gone into the middle.

R: Yeah, so you just keep going up and then maybe you'd end up-

P: Finally.

R: That'd be it. Thank you very much. So, did you like having these assemblies?

P: Yeah. We just had our own time and space to think. And we don't really have that moment of time in school, so I think it's good.

**Comment [E205]:** Time to think

**Comment [E206]:** No other time

R: That's interesting, because I was going to say, we don't have much time in school.

P: Yeah.

R: So do you think it's a good use of our time to have that?

P: I think it - yeah, because first of all you learn about things, and you get time to think and we really don't get that much time to think in maybe a day, so, that just helps you have time to think.

**Comment [E207]:** Learn about ideas/beliefs

**Comment [E208]:** Time to think

**Comment [E209]:** No other time

R: Yeah, time just to think. So if you could only keep one thing from the Collective Worship that we've done, what would it be that you would keep?

P: Um...things that I made.

R: So you'd keep the making and be able to keep the things that you've made?

P: Yeah.

R: Why would you want to keep them?

P: Because maybe when I'm older and I finally learn about everything, and I'll look up to what I thought when I was younger, and it will just make me think about what we did in school.

R: So you'd be able to look back on what you thought. Do you think you'll have all the answers when you're older?



P: Not all the answers, but most of them.

R: But not all of them.

P: Mmm.

R: So, if we go back to the journey, do you think that you're still working out about what you believe, and as you get older you'll work more and more out, do you think?

P: Yeah, and then I'll finally, like, learn, because we do have to go to a journey if you're a Muslim, once in a lifetime.

R: So you are on that journey as a Muslim?

P: Yeah.

R: And then-

P: So you have to go to journey in a, um, Mecca, in Saudi Arabia, and when you go there you learn about a lot of stuff, how we worship God, um, the Kaaba, and the stone from heaven. Yeah.

R: And you know quite a bit about it - what do you think the difference is in being able to go there?

P: Maybe it's better because then you actually experience it than just watch it on TV or see pictures. Maybe it's better if you experience it.

R: Yeah, so it's good to experience something. So do you think, um, this is now me taking a really sideways jump, um, do you think that you're able to experience something through the class assemblies in a way you weren't able to in the RE lessons? Because in the RE we were learning about something, in the Collective - in the class assemblies - were they similar or was there a difference?

P: I think there was a difference because we were learning more about spirituality, but in RE we were kind of doing, maybe, like, we had to write about what we thought but not all of it, but then, when you just think about it's better. Because you think about it in your head and you can like think about what you want.

**Comment [E210]:** Think for yourself

R: So it was an easier time for that? Thinking and...

P: Instead of writing it down.

R: Thank you very much. Is there anything else you'd like to say about what we did?

P: Not really.

R: Did you - were you, um, were you glad to be in - part of them?

P: Yeah.

R: And did you find - because I spoke to you a while back before - did you find that you were able to, um, to feel comfortable as yourself, even when there was a Christian story? Did you still feel comfortable with that?

P: Yeah, because I can relate to it in a different way, so it doesn't really matter what it is - I can still relate to it.

**Comment [E211]:** Think for yourself

R: So you can still relate to it?

P: Yeah.

R: And feel comfortable. Thank you very much.

*Interview 7: Ollie (Agnostic)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: I'll do the same thing as before and type up some of the things that we've said and give them back to you. I've got two from the last one. Lovely. So, what lesson were you just having?

P: Science and doing - like we've gotta cut like a picture of the moon and we've got - there's like little paragraphs of what it is and you've gotta put them together. Like the one with just a black circle, you've gotta - so, that was a new moon, and it would say "new moon," and with the paragraph you've got to put that next to it and stick it down.

R: So you've got to match it?

P: Yeah.

R: That sounds good. And what did you have for breakfast this morning?

P: I think, like, I don't even know what they're called.

R: Was it like a cereal?

P: Yeah.

R: What was it like?

P: They're like golden balls.

R: Mmm. Are they honey? Are they quite sweet?

P: Yeah.

R: Sounds very nice. I just had rice crispies. So, I was wondering today - actually I'll put these to the side for one moment - um, if you - we've had some class assemblies, some different class assemblies over the last four weeks, I was just wondering: have you noticed anything about them?

P: Well all of them have been about religious, like, and we've been usually drawing on a piece of paper, of, like, something that I - well yesterday we did something that we were searching for. I didn't really get what it meant, like what we were searching for, but...

**Comment [E212]:** Literal reflection

R: Yeah, it's a difficult concept because there's different sorts of searches aren't there? We could maybe talk about that in a minute. Is there anything else - so you've said that they were a bit more religious - is there anything else that you've noticed that you think was a bit different?

P: Not really.

R: Not really. What I've got here - I've got some words for some of the things I think we - were part of the Collective Worship that we've had, and I was just wondering if you could pick what your favourite part was. So pick one and explain why you've chosen that.

P: What, of these things that we've been doing in the assemblies?

R: Yeah, so in the four class assemblies we've had, what do you think has been your favourite part? You can take one of these words.

P: "Drawing."

R: You've immediately gone for "drawing." Why was that your favourite part?

P: Because I let my ideas out of what I, like, one of them we done was, like, who [you loved, I think]? and things that you liked, I think, and I just got to draw what I thought, so.

**Comment [E213]:** Requiring response

**Comment [E214]:** Think for yourself

R: Why was it good to be able to draw it?

P: Because, it, like, last longer, because if I keep on thinking about it I might, like, one day forget, but if I have it on a piece of paper I can just keep it in a drawer, or at school, and then I can look back at it.

R: So being able to keep your ideas? Mmmm. Is there another one that you think was a favourite part? Some people have chosen two or three so that's why I've asked.

P: "Story."

R: Can you tell me why you've chosen that one?

P: Because, um, when we read the stories we - well it was telling us about something else and one of them was - it's giving us another idea of things. So one of them was with the boy that got the hat and he gave it to the milkman, and he didn't see him wearing it and then like, he thought that he was sad for it, and then he realised that it was for a dog, or something that he found - the milkman found, and then he was all happy - he was happy for it.

**Comment [E215]:** Have ideas

R: Yeah, so, he'd given it on to someone else, so - sorry, we had Mrs W singing there - um, yeah, so it helps you to hear about that thing and something being given on. Do you think that's something that's different or do you think that's something the same, from what we've done before?

P: Mmm...

R: Having the story.

P: Yeah, kind of because, the class assemblies that - when we didn't do the religious thing, we just - we look - we just - we usually got pictures up and, like, spoke about it. Like, one of them was the...I can't even remember where it was, but, a picture of the place that got flooded-

R: The Philippines.

P: Yeah, we just - we looked at that and - I can't remember but, I think...there was...I remember one of the times, I'm not sure if it was there or if I saw it at home or something, there was like a penguin, a load of penguins, I'm not sure...

R: Yeah, we thought about the huddle of penguins, you're right.

P: Yeah.

R: Okay, so you remember a couple of the ones where we just looked at a picture and thought

about what that might show, so the story is a bit different?

P: Yeah.

R: Is there anything that was a least favourite part?

P: "Silence."

R: Can you tell me a bit about that?

P: Because I really like talking, and I don't really like just sitting in silence, so... I just didn't really like it, but I don't mind it, but I'd rather talk, because, like, I just like talking.

**Comment [E216]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: What sort of talking would you have liked to have done in the class assembly rather than silence?

P: Just talking about... anything really. But... I'm not sure. Anything.

R: So it's hard to have silent time rather than talking?

P: Yeah.

R: Lovely. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

P: Not really.

R: I'll just pop these away then. So what I've got next is I've got four pictures that are all connected to each of the Collective Worships. Now you've spoken about one already so I might say - see if you remember anything about any of the others. I'll pick those up. We've got these pictures here.

P: Hat.

R: Yeah you've talked about the hat. The second and third and fourth.

P: I remember that one, that was with the girl or boy chucking the starfish into the sea again.

R: Yeah, what can you tell me about that?

P: Not sure. Err...

R: Do you remember why the girl or boy was doing that?

P: I think because, it was like-

[Phone rings]

R: Sorry Ollie, can you hold on to that thought- [answers phone] What was the thought Ollie?

P: Because he or she saw like loads of starfish just sitting in the sand and thought, um, might help some of them, not all of them, but it will change it if - they save one, a couple, so, they just saved some. And then I think there was a person that thought that the girl or boy was crazy just saving

some, but it would still be helping because, like, it's helping some, and at least there's not every single one still there. Like, they might, they might all just, like, save one family of them and that would still be good because, there might be one of the family just alone in the sea and then they'd be really happy because they're back together.

**Comment [E217]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: Yeah, so it'd make a difference to that one. Did it make you think of anything? You've remembered the story - did it make you think of anything?

P: Made me thought of people helping each other and things like that. Um...makes me think of helping my - when I sometimes help my friends. Like, and my cousins because they're a lot like young - the oldest is, I think, five or something, and they usually can't get off the trampoline because its too high, so once I helped them all by - because we have this barrel thing and I moved it next to it so they can get down, and I put another chair, like, a little chair next to it so that its like stairs, so they could get down. So it's made me think of helping people and stuff.

**Comment [E218]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: Making a small difference that makes a big difference to them. And how did you feel during it? Did you feel good about it? Or sad about the starfish? Or worried? Or pleased?

P: Kind of sad, and pleased at the same time. Pleased because some of them got saved and sad because, like, some of them, well most of them were still, like, got a chance of dying, so kind of made me feel sad.

R: Yeah, so it's that mixture. Can you remember anything about this one? The one yesterday? You said something about a search, and that you were confused by the search?

P: I can't remember that one.

R: So this was from the end of the Collective Worship.

P: Yeah.

R: Do you remember what the person had been searching for? I think all our brains were a bit addled after the talent show.

P: I can't remember. God, I think.

R: Do you remember where the man found God? It was Elijah.

P: In a cave I think.

R: What was it like at that time?

P: I can't remember...um...I'm not sure.

R: Don't worry, that's fine. If I pop these away, because actually we can look at your responses and see if there's anything you want to talk about from those. So if we get these out. So that was the first, the second?

P: That was the first, that was the second, that was the third and that was the last.

R: So this was the person in the cave?

P: Yeah.

R: What was - what's he holding?

P: That is a torch to see. And that's just to protect, that little knife.

**Comment [E219]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: That's to protect him. Do you think it's scary going on this sort of search thing?

P: Yeah, because, like, you don't know what you're going to find and you might get in trouble, so you might want something to help you.

**Comment [E220]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: Mmm, and to protect you. In the end - so there were three things, there was the fire and the earthquake and the storm, and Elijah didn't find them in that but he found them in the cave, in the calm, peace. Do you think that - so is this where they're still searching do you think? From your drawing - is it the searching or the finding?

P: Um, I'm not sure what I done. It's quite - it's kind - the way I done it, it kind of looks like finding because the smile - happy that he found God - and it kind of looks like searching because of the way he's looking, like looking, and he's got the torch, like pointing to see.

R: So it's a bit of both of them, so there's some looking, but you think that when he found God, or when you find God, it's something that makes you smile? Thank you. Is there another one you'd like to tell me about?

P: I can't really remember what they were for.

R: So if you think that they went with each of these assemblies that might give you a clue because it's been a little while.

P: That one went there, that one, I think...

R: I think it was like that.

P: Yeah, I know that was there.

R: What was this one about? Do you remember?

P: I can't remember that one.

R: So the story was that Moses had been asked to do something by God, and he was like, "No, don't ask me! I can't do it!" But in the end he did. So can you remember what you were thinking?

P: I can't remember that one.

R: Do you remember either of these ones?

P: I think I remember that one.

R: Yeah? The starfish.

P: That's for helping, like, friends and family, and [something?] and football.

R: So, if its helping, can I ask about - so I think I talked to you about something that you'd most like to save in the world and to help and to look after, so are these all the things? A fair few. Because I'm quite intrigued, because we've got football, and these two have got Playstation Three, and all three of these - why have you - do you know why you've put it on those ones? What is it about Playstation Three?

P: Well ever since I've got it I just really like it, and I just want it forever, so that one I thought, like, to save it - well not to save it but, er, kind of save it, because if like, they start to try and ban it I don't really want them to, so I kind of really, like save it there. And that one is for giving, and, like because sometimes I play with my brother on Fifa and we use - well last time we did we had, well we ordered pizza or something, and we got pizza to share in my room, and then we played Fifa, and I, because I had beaten him 7-3 I think, I let him get some goals and then we just carried on.

**Comment [E221]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: So you were giving him something?

P: Yeah.

R: So you let him have the goals. Is there anything else with that one?

P: Don't think so.

R: Because that's interesting for me, because I'd seen it on all three but I didn't know the story behind. So actually, in this one it's something that's so important that you'd want to save it and here it's something really important but you were prepared to share it and give something to someone with it. So is this that it - because this was about ourselves - so, why do you think it's in this one?

P: Because I always play on my playstation after - well, I get home from school and then I, like, speak to my mum and my sister and my brother, and then I go and watch TV, and then I usually go and play on my playstation with X and Y, because they have a Playstation and I've got internet on it.

R: So you can play with your friends?

P: Yeah, so we can play on Fifa, and GTA and me and X can play on a game called Call of Duty Ghosts - no not Ghosts, Black Ops II, and soon we're going to be able to play on Call of Duty Ghosts. Because I'm getting that on my birthday in twenty days.

R: Is it less than that now?

P: Nineteen days I think.

R: Exciting. Thank you so much for sharing those Ollie. If we just pop them to the side. So, we've talked in RE a bit about spirituality, and I've got here some different ways that some people think of spirituality. So one way some people think about it's like we have a journey through our life, we get older, we might get a job, have a family, those things, but as well as the life journey, there's also a spiritual journey, where we're - we develop how we think and what we believe in and things like that. Some people think of it kind of as food, and that we need food for our body to help it grow and be healthy, but also a different sort of food for the soul, so not this sort of food but something else that we need for who we are. And some people might describe it as there's this outer self that everyone sees, but then there's an inner self that we keep hidden most of the time and



only share occasionally. Does one of these make more sense than the others for you?

P: Not really, they're all just the same.

R: They're all the same?

P: Kind of.

R: Well if I try and use them all then, because I'm wondering if any of the Collective Worships or any part of the assemblies kind of helped you to think about the spiritual journey, or what food you need for your soul, or it gave you something for your soul, or if it helped you to develop the inner part of who you are?

P: I don't think so. I'm not sure.

R: But it didn't seem to?

P: Not really.

R: Did it make you think about anything? About any of your thoughts or your beliefs?

P: Kind of but I'm not sure - in a way, but I can't really explain how.

R: It's tricky to, isn't it? I'm trying to think of what might have been a way. So, um, did it make you think about who you could be? Or how you could act? Or something that you believe in?

P: Kind of. Like something I could believe in.

R: Can you tell me a bit more about that? It might be difficult but...

P: Um...

R: What did it help you believe in? Or what did it make you think about believing in?

P: Well...well because I - because I believed in God and I kind of didn't, it kind of made me believe in God more, because, all the things it, like, in the assemblies that we done, like, all the good and bad things made me think more, like, who would do that. Like, God would do it when we'd been, like, good and nice and when bad things happen it's usually when we've been bad and things.

**Comment [E222]:** Sensing something numinous

R: So it made you think that some of the good things that happen are because of God, and some of the bad things are because of things that we do? Is that right? Thank you, is there anything more that you want to tell me about that?

P: Nope.

R: Thank you very much for sharing because I know that a lot of these things are "inner self," or they're things which we keep a bit more hidden. Now, I'm getting near the end. I've got a blob tree here, I was just wondering, which blob do you think best describes you during the Collective Worship? Could you pick one and explain why you've picked that one?

P: I think that one, because when we do the Collective Worship we always, like, spend time, like,

together, as a class, and that's just showing us all together, and in a way that one, like, because we help each other sometimes.

**Comment [E223]:** Experiencing community

**Comment [E224]:** Share ideas

R: How do you think we help each other in Collective Worship?

P: Um, like, because sometimes people are stuck on what to draw. Like, they don't really get it, and then some people say, like, explain it in, like, more better way, like, kind of, so say someone didn't get it - for like you had to draw - with the one that we did yesterday, and then I think F or G, I'm not sure which one, they like explained it more to me, so then I kind of got it a bit more, so I just drew what I thought.

**Comment [E225]:** Share ideas

R: So there's some way we can help each other understand what we think and it's just something that we do together. Do you think it's - do you think it's important that we have these times and these thoughts together or do you think we could do them on our own?

P: It's a bit better together I think because, like, we can share it and then...yeah we can just like share it with each other, and...we can just, yeah, like you share it with like the people around you and...I'm not sure.

**Comment [E226]:** Experiencing community

R: But it's time to share?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you. So did you like having these assemblies?

P: Yeah.

R: Can you tell me why you did?

P: Because we could speak to each other about things and we could draw, like, things that we liked and what we were searching for, and we got to like hear stories about people, like when they were sad and then sometimes they turned happy, and sometimes they're happy and then they stay happy or then they be sad. So, it just made me think of, like, feelings of people, because the one yes-... no, the one with the milkman, the boy or girl, I think it was a boy? Yeah. They - they were sad, and then they either were happy or jealous because the dog had a home and it was using - the hat was used for a good reason, and jealous because you don't have the dog.

**Comment [E227]:** Share ideas

R: There was a mix of feelings there. We don't have much time in the school day with everything we fit in. Do you think they're a good use of time?

P: Yeah. Because, like, sometimes, like, well it just uses up the time that we have spare, so, um we can speak to each other and we can share our thoughts with everyone, and...you just get to do some stuff that you usually don't get to do in assembly. Like, normal assemblies.

**Comment [E228]:** No other time

**Comment [E229]:** Share ideas

R: What sort of things do you get to do that you don't normally?

P: Drawing. And like, nearly everyone gets to share an idea if they want to but in assembly, like, not everyone does because there's like three hundred people in the school nearly, I think, and...like, we don't have enough time to get through everyone, so...since there's only like twenty-something in our class, there's not that much, so, you can, like, you can share - everyone can share something and...yeah.

**Comment [E230]:** Share ideas

**Comment [E231]:** Share ideas

R: Yeah. I'm slightly interested because you said that they can use up spare time, so do you think they're best if they're - if - so just be put in if there's a bit of time left at the end of the day, or do you think we should make time for them at the end of the day?

P: Um...I'm not sure.

R: So I guess the question is, is it a good use of time when we haven't really got anything else to do, or is it something where we - it's a good time to have, so we should finish the lesson fifteen minutes before the end of the day and have them, even if that means we don't get something in the lesson done?

P: Um...I'm still not really sure.

R: You're not really sure. It's okay either way. So maybe you think it's best if if we've got a bit of time that's a good thing to do, but actually learning is important so we should maybe do that. Do you think that's where you are?

P: Yeah, kind of.

R: Yeah? Kind of. Not quite, but...

P: Yeah.

R: Can you elaborate? Or are we a bit stuck?

P: Bit stuck.

R: Okay. Um, if you could only keep one thing about them then - so maybe, if we're just going for a bit of spare time, so we won't have very long because we won't make much time, and we could only keep one thing, what would it be?

P: I want two things for different reasons: Drawing, because it's like fun and you can keep it for more longer, and the stories because it kind of gives - like - tells you what other people could feel sometimes. Like, because sometimes in stories you might - it might show their emotions, and, like, because people might be happy and then - and you'll be able to know that by seeing how they react to stuff. So say you say, "Do you want to play?" and they say, "Yeah," that might make you think they're happy and stuff, and that's kind of the stories helping you, like get ideas of how they might act when they feel certain things.

R: And maybe how you could act as well. Thank you very much Ollie. Is there anything you feel you haven't said that you would like to?

P: No.

R: Thank you very much.

**Comment [E232]:** Experience different ideas

*Interview 8: Alissa (Christian)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: This one, and we'll start this one. Okay. What lesson were you just having?

P: Topics. I mean, science.

R: Were you just finishing science?

P: Yeah.

R: Ooh! I'm chucking a pencil. What had you done in science?

P: We were...we watched a little clip of how the moon changes, and there was eight phases of what the moon changes to.

R: So you were learning about the phases of the moon? Did you hear the rap? I love the rap. Brilliant. And what did you have for breakfast this morning?

P: Toast.

R: With anything on it?

P: Butter.

R: Did it all melt in?

P: Uhuh.

R: Yummy. I had rice crispies.

P: My sister had jam, strawberry jam.

R: But you didn't want jam?

P: I don't like it.

R: So you just had butter. Sounds good. So, I wanted to ask you a bit about the different class assemblies we've had. I know you missed the first one, but then you had three. Have you noticed anything about them?

P: That they all reflect on life.

R: Can you explain that a bit more?

P: Well, the first - well the second one I actually can't remember. The last one was, what you are searching for, and that's part of life. The other one was the starfish, and I can't remember what that one was.

R: Well we'll see if we remember in a bit. Um, and this one was about other people, so they're all

**Comment [E233]:** Making connections to understand the past

things -

P: I think the first one was what you've received? And what you want to give.

R: Yeah, so it was with others.

P: So that's part of life as well.

R: So they're all important things. That's part of life. Is there anything else that was a bit different to what we've had before - the class assemblies.

P: I'm not sure.

R: You're not sure. Is there anything a bit different from the assemblies we've had in the hall?

P: The careers.

R: They are a bit different from the careers assemblies. How are they different from those?

P: Well...the similar thing is that they're both part of life, and the different thing is...one what you think about and two what you're going - what you might be.

R: So is, um - were these ones about what you think about and the other ones were looking at what you might decide to be? Who you might decide to be? Okay. If I give you some of these words - these are words that I think were included in the assemblies we had. So, just the last three that we had. And could you pick - now I've said one, but some people have picked two or three things that were your favourite part? So if you could pick one you think was your favourite part and tell me why you've picked that one. So you've chosen "candle." Could you tell me a bit about that?

P: Well sometimes when I look at a candle and it's lit, I think of all the times that I've been helped, which is a sign of God for me.

**Comment [E234]:** Sensing something numinous

R: So it reminds you of when you've been helped and so is a sign of God? Why is that a good thing to have in our class assembly? To have that sign of God?

P: It gives people a chance to pray.

**Comment [E235]:** Opportunity to pray

R: So there's a chance to pray in that assembly. Is that something that you think is different, or is that similar to what we've had before in class?

P: Similar.

R: How's it similar?

P: Because in assembly there's a candle and at the end we pray, and sometimes - well all the ones that I've made these assemblies in class, I've always memorised things for the candle, so...

R: So you remember the bit that we say with the candle?

P: And I pray as well, sometimes after we've done the class assembly and sometimes after you've lit the candle.

**Comment [E236]:** Marked/bounded

R: So you sometime pray after I've lit the candle, to God, and sometimes you pray when you're - when you've made the drawing or after the whole assembly? Is that right? Is that something you did - so some people have been remembering when we had an assembly with the penguins in a huddle - I don't know if you'll have been in for all of these - and sometimes - one time I read a story about Dogger, and one time I read - we looked at a picture from the Philippines. Do you think that you prayed on those occasions? Do you think that's something that's new to these class assemblies?

P: New.

R: You think it's new. Why do you think you've prayed with these class assemblies and not before?

P: What do you mean by "before"?

R: So, like with the picture of the Philippines or the story of Dogger - like if you were saying that it's kind of a new thing that you've done, what's helped you to do that?

P: I'm not sure

R: So I suppose that you've mentioned the candle - has that helped you? Is there another part that has helped you? To pray? Or... There might not be. You've chosen "space". Can you tell me a bit about that?

P: Mmmm...

R: Why have you chosen "space"? Is it something that helps you?

P: **It helps me to relax and be calm.**

**Comment [E237]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: And that's something that then helps you to...to be with God? Or...Does it help you in another way to relax and be calm?

P: **To think about what...what I might do.**

**Comment [E238]:** Reconsidering the future

R: What you might do. Thank you. So it gives you that time. Is there anything else that you had that was a favourite part? Okay. Is there anything that's a least favourite part? You've chosen "ending". Can you tell me why that's a least favourite part?

P: Well, the reason that I chose that was because I want, like, the, **well I really want sometimes to reflect on what I'm going to do.**

**Comment [E239]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So is it that you want some more time at the end? To think about what you're going to do? So if, um, if we had longer, and had more time, would the ending still - would that make the ending a better part, or do you think it would still be your least favourite?

P: It would be a better part.

R: So you want a bit more time. Is it a bit more time drawing? Is it a bit more time being still? A bit more time with the candle?

P: **A bit more time having space.**

**Comment [E240]:** Time to think

R: Yeah because everything's often quite busy isn't it? Thank you very much. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about? So if I pop these away. Now, we've already started to remember some of the Collective Worship that we've had, but I've got four pictures that are connected to each of the worships, and I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about one of them? So could you pick one and tell me a bit about the worship, and maybe what you thought about or how you felt? So - and you weren't there for that one, but we've got the second the third and the fourth.

P: Mmm... The third - I mean, the - this one.

R: The starfish. The third one. What can you tell me about that one?

P: Well, when I did it I drew - I drew the star and then cut it out and then I did it - prayed to God, with a prayer.

Comment [E241]: Opportunity to pray

R: So you wrote a prayer. What was your prayer about?

P: About creating the world and having all - and creation of the great things that we have.

R: So why did that Collective Worship - that assembly, make you think about - or help you with that prayer?

P: I'm not sure.

R: It just came - came out. Do you remember what the story was behind this one?

P: Think it was a little girl who was chucking the starfish in the sea.

R: And do you remember why she was doing that?

P: She was trying to save them, so they don't get killed.

R: And what did someone else think? Because there was a man who wasn't doing that. What did he think?

P: "She can't chuck all of them in there."

R: But she thought that she should carry on. Do you remember why?

P: And try and save them.

R: And try. How did you feel when you heard that story?

P: Happy that someone's trying their hardest to try, um, not make - to try to save someone's - something for someone.

R: Yeah, so you're happy that someone was trying to save them. Did it make you think anything? No. But it was happy. Do you remember anything from this last assembly we had? So if we look at the response as well. Do you remember what the story was and then what you created? No. What have you drawn then? And can you tell me about it?

P: I've drawn some grass, and then I've drawn that sort of cloud, and I wrote "peace."

R: So there's grass and then a cloud with "peace" on. You've kind of hidden something underneath. Did you hide it on purpose?

P: I put - it's what I'm looking for.

**Comment [E242]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Because we had a search in the story didn't we? So peace is something that you're looking for.

P: Because there's not that much peace in the world, and that would be one of my wishes if I had any.

**Comment [E243]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So one of the things that's so important to you, and a wish, is to bring peace? Is there - so something you're looking for - was there anything from the story that helped you think how you could look for it? What you could do?

P: I'm not sure.

R: Not sure? But it made you think of that? Thank you very much. Do you want to tell me about your final response that you created?

P: It was the first one.

R: Yeah, so the one about "others" and the hat, and what have you created? It's a masterpiece.

P: Well I've created flowers - well a flower and some little flowers, and someone's given me them and then I've given them to my grandma when she was poorly.

**Comment [E244]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: Oh, so someone had given them to you, but you gave them then to your grandma. And how did that make you feel?

P: Happy. Because the flowers that I received were my grandma's favourite, and because she was really sad when she was poorly I tried to make her feel better.

**Comment [E245]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: And were you able to?

P: And she was happy when I gave them to her.

**Comment [E246]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: So it's really like the story then, isn't it? That giving something and making someone else happy makes you happy too. Good. And you've got a love heart there as well.

P: Well I've received love and I've gave it to other people as well.

**Comment [E247]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: So that's something that you can share. Thank you very much for that. If we just pop these to one side. Now, we've been looking at spirituality a bit - or we looked at it in RE and there's a few different ways that sometimes people explain what it is. One way is that it's a bit like a life journey - we have a life journey where we grow older and we might go to university, get a job, have a family, but we also have a spiritual journey where in our kind of thoughts and our beliefs and maybe our awareness of God we develop as we go. Some people say that we need food for our bodies to grow and be healthy, but that we also need a different sort of food for our soul. And some people say that we have an outer self which people see, but also an inner self we keep hidden and don't often share. Does one of these make more sense than another one?



P: Mmmm...

R: So the food. So if we think about that, um, I wanted to ask, did any of the assemblies or any part of the assemblies that we had help you to think about or give you any food for your soul? Anything that could help you develop your soul? [Pause.] You're not sure. Is there any part that felt like it gave you a - um - just something that you could think about, or just helped you with a belief that you had?

P: "Life."

R: Can you tell me a bit more about this idea of life?

P: If you have food for your body and food for the soul, then your life will continue, instead of end.

R: So do you think that the assemblies helped you - helped to give you life? Can you explain a bit about how they might have done? [Pause.] It's a very difficult question isn't it? Is there anything that you took from them, that you thought, "That's important to me?" [Pause.] Not really, it's hard to say. But in some way they did give you a bit of life, even though you're not quite sure what it is. Lovely. My goodness they're noisy next door aren't they? So, the final of the things I've got is, I've got here a blob tree, and I was just wondering which blob do you think best describes you during the Collective Worship? So can you pick one you think best describes how you were during the Collective Worship and can you tell me a bit more about it - so can you explain why?

P: That one or that one.

R: So these two. I'm just going to go and shut that door, and then we'll... So those two at the top. Can you explain why you've chosen those two?

P: Well when the assembly starts and when the music's on it gives me a chance to rely on what I think's going to happen.

Comment [E248]: Marked/bounded

R: So it - it helps you to - so you can go with what you think's going to happen. Can you explain that a bit more? And why you rely on it? [Laughs.] So it's when it starts and when - and also when the music plays. So the people are looking pretty happy, so is that how you feel at those times? Mmm. Why - I suppose they're the happiest two aren't they?

P: Well that one and that one are happy.

R: Yeah. So there are quite a few happy people in there. Why did you choose these two?

P: Because they looked the happiest.

R: And it was a really happy time.

P: And so does that one a bit.

R: Yeah, they're swinging. Because I noticed that they're both kind of at the top of the tree as well.

P: And if the tree was like the happiest and the saddest then I would go at the top as well.

R: Mmm.

P: Because there are some sad people at the bottom.

R: So being at the top of the tree is happier. What do you think is at the top of the tree? What are people trying to get to?

P: The top.

R: Just the top. What do you think the top might be in Collective - in our class assemblies?

P: Happy.

R: Just being really happy. Mmm. Thank you very much. So, did you like having these assemblies?

P: Uhuh.

R: And can you explain why? What was good about them - you liked having them?

P: The candle.

R: The candle, and that moment. Was there - because we don't have much time at school and there's lots of learning to fit in and things, do you think they're a good use of the time that we have?

P: Mmm.

R: Can you tell me a bit about why?

P: Because if you believe in God and you want to - because like at home you're really busy, you don't get a chance to pray. It's a good opportunity to, um, do the praying.

**Comment [E249]:** Opportunity to pray

R: So it's a really good opportunity for that prayer. Do you think that's important for everybody?

P: Only to the people that believe in God.

**Comment [E250]:** Opportunity to pray

R: Do you think it's still important for those people to have that time?

P: Sometimes.

R: But for you it's really important for prayer. So if you could only keep one thing - I think I might know the answer - what would it be? If we had to squish it into a really short time, what would be the one thing you'd keep?

P: RE.

R: So something all different together. Is there anything from the class assemblies that you'd keep? So, we can have - we have all our lessons, but for our class assemblies we can only have two minutes, or something. What would you keep from those? [Pause.] You're not sure. I just wondered whether you'd want to keep the candle, because that bit was obviously important to you, or whether you'd want to keep the music, or the drawing, or the story, or the - wondering?

P: Candle and drawing.

R: So keeping the candle and the drawing. Thank you very much. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about anything. Thankyou.

*Interview 9: Matthew (Theist)*

*Key: R = Researcher, P = Pupil*

R: No because I haven't done it yet, but I will. That's what the Easter holidays are for - sadly. Okay. So, it was just about to be assembly - what did you have for breakfast this morning, just to start us off.

P: Biscuits.

R: You had biscuits? What sort of biscuits?

P: Plain digestives.

R: Ah, they're not bad. So is that - is that what you usually have for breakfast?

P: No, I'll just eat anything that's in the cupboard or fridge.

R: So you don't have a usual breakfast.

P: No.

R: You just - you just-

P: I just eat anything.

R: What's been the best breakfast you've had then?

P: Err... Think it - the biscuits today.

R: The biscuits today?

P: I ate the whole packet to myself.

R: A whole packet for breakfast?

P: Not today, but.

R: Oh, okay, over time.

P: Yeah.

R: Still, I'm not sure.

P: Over like three days.

R: I've had rice crispies, so very boring in comparison. Now, we've had some different class assemblies in the last few weeks, have you noticed anything about them?

P: No.

R: Nothing at all? That's interesting, because I think I've noticed some reactions that you've had.

So have you - do you think anything's been different compared with the class assemblies we had before?

P: Well... we've varied in all we - all we did in class assemblies is read a book.

**Comment [E251]:** Experiencing different ideas

R: Mmm, so we maybe just read a book?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah? What - there's a couple of other times people mentioned: the huddle of penguins.

P: Oh yeah.

R: We looked at something, and the picture of the Philippines, something that had happened. So one of the differences is that - is that we're doing - so are we doing different things? We doing a bit more? Are we doing -

P: I think we're doing a lot of different things, because, the football, well, I wasn't expecting to do any - well, anything to do with football in these class assemblies, and I did.

**Comment [E252]:** Experiencing different ideas

R: That's interesting.

P: And I didn't - and it was a bit weird about a starfish.

R: That's true. If we come to those in a minute because I'd really like to hear about them.

P: And - and I don't understand why I - I did this - I can't remember what story that was.

R: So, if we go back over a few things. So, these are some words of some of the things that I think have been in the class assemblies that we've had - the last four. And I was just wondering what your favourite part was, and if you could tell me why it was a favourite part.

P: I've just got one question quickly: space.

R: So, I probably, when I wrote it, wasn't thinking of the solar system sort of space, but as in having space.

P: Ah. Because I think you spelt that "space" wrong then.

R: It's spelt the same. You can check in the dictionary later.

P: Well that's a bit weird then. Um.

R: So, "drawing". Why have you chosen that to be your favourite part?

P: Uh, well, um. I picked it because I do like drawing, but try and not do much in school, because people like to take the mickey out of me, so - not many people -

**Comment [E253]:** Experiencing community

R: Do they - So that happens in art usually?

P: No. Just normally when - normally, just - normal school days.

R: Mmmm.

P: People just take the mickey of me, and then no-one gets - not - because I like drawing.

R: So you like drawing, but you don't want to most of the time?

P: Yeah.

R: And did you feel you were able to? In the class assemblies?

P: Well, sometimes. Sometimes I just feel like I just want to make something.

**Comment [E254]:** Requiring response

R: But it gave you that opportunity to do it? Is there anything else that you thought was a favourite thing? Some people picked more than one so I thought I'd give you the chance.

P: Maybe the story bit, because normally the class likes just hearing stories, so.

**Comment [E255]:** Experience different ideas

R: Do you think it's the same as, like when I've been reading through the story - like the class book - is it the same as that or is it different to that?

P: Well it's a bit different because that one's just a normal regular story, and all the other ones are connected to like a reason or something to do.

**Comment [E256]:** Learn from ideas/beliefs

R: Yeah, so there's a reason behind it?

P: Yeah, but in the ones we're reading now as a class, it's just a normal book.

R: So, they're not just normal stories.

P: No.

R: They're - they've got a reason behind them. Do you think that's a good thing? So you've picked it out as a favourite part.

P: Well sometimes it is, but sometimes it isn't.

R: When isn't it?

P: Well, when - the reason when it isn't, is, like, um...trying to think of one now. Um, when like, it's, like, so many people are upset, and it's another story about - err, sadness, and then everyone just gets more upset, and then, it's just, everyone's more and more upset.

**Comment [E257]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: Do you think we shouldn't have sad stories?

P: Well, sometimes, yeah, but the reason to have them is so you know how it feels like to have some emotions.

**Comment [E258]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So the story gives us a chance to - to know what it can feel like?

P: Yeah.

R: To have those emotions. It might be interesting to think, when we look at the different stories

that we had, if there are any you preferred, and any not and why. Is there anything that was a least favourite thing?

P: "Stillness."

R: Can you tell me why you've picked stillness?

P: Well I've picked stillness because not many - some - many people are just, like to move about, not to sit in the quiet.

**Comment [E259]:** Time to think

R: Mmm. So is it other people moving?

P: No - no. It's like, I'm - I like moving about a lot.

R: Right.

P: But sometimes I just can't be bothered. And then some people are just like, "I wanna move I wanna move I wanna move I wanna laugh." And they just do it. Like, once in sea cadets, [name] and his friends, we all laughed, and then I nearly got kicked out of sea cadets.

R: Because you'd laughed at that time?

P: Yeah. In the middle of the evening colours, when it's a special occasion for it.

R: Okay. So did you feel that this was a special occasion.

P: Yeah.

R: When you needed to be still, but -

P: And quiet.

R: And you found that hard?

P: Yeah, because [name] and his friends - he's - he's dating their exes.

R: Sounds very complicated.

P: Yeah.

R: What about in the class assembly? Did you have that same feeling?

P: Well, yeah, coz I do like moving about a lot, but, um, there is a time to be still and quiet.

**Comment [E260]:** Time to think

R: Mmm. Did this feel like a time?

P: Yeah.

R: Or did it feel -

P: Yeah, because sometimes there is a time and sometimes there isn't.

R: Mmm. And, so, was the stillness the hard bit because it's sometimes hard.

P: Yeah.

R: So, for some of them it was hard but some of them you liked it?

P: Yeah.

R: Which - did it get easier? Or did it just depend on the day?

P: Normally it just depends on the day, what mood I'm in. If I'm in a bad - if I'm in a bad mood, I want everyone to be quiet.

R: So actually stillness is easier when you're in a bad mood?

P: Yeah.

R: That's interesting, because it can give that, that space - we've used a word there - to to just to let it be rather than anything more. Right if I move these. So, we talked about some of the pictures - sorry, some of the stories being easier, um, or better than others, and some of the stories weren't as good. So if we just have a quick look. So these are a picture connected to each of the stories. Can you tell me a bit about them? So do you want to start by telling me a bit about a story that was a good story, and one that was a difficult story? So that was a good story, the starfish one.

P: Yeah, because I've a soft touch for animals, so, animals dying just hurts my feelings, because once I was at the pub with my dad and they set a nest on fire and they didn't realise there was an egg on it. So the egg fell off and I saw a dead bird on the floor.

**Comment [E261]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: Oh goodness. That must have been hard. And so, that - it made you think of that time?

P: Yeah, because, them starfish would have died, because they wouldn't get all of them done.

R: So what did it make you think?

P: Err, it made me feel a bit upset, but also a bit happy, because the young girl was trying her best for it.

**Comment [E262]:** Direct response to stimulus

R: And did it make you think about anything for you?

P: Um...no.

R: Not really. So it made you think about the nest. Did it make you think about anything that you could do?

P: Well, yeah, because if - if I see like a bird on the floor, no, no, not like a bird. If I see an animal in danger, my mum doesn't let me help it sometimes.

**Comment [E263]:** Reconsidering the future

R: But you want to?

P: Yeah.

R: So did it make you think that you'd want to help them in danger?



P: Yeah.

R: So that was a story that you liked that you thought was a good one. Was there one that you thought wasn't so good or so helpful? This one at the beginning. Can you tell me about that one?

P: Well, like I said, um, I'm not like - I don't believe like everything people say about God, I just believe in God, not what he's done. And I do believe in Jesus, but, not everything like that. Like he moved the sea, because that's impossible.

R: That's interesting - this story - so in this story there was a burning bush, so that made you think, "Well that's impossible."

P: No, the burning bush is possible, but like, because that story's connected with like moving the waves and making all their water blood.

R: So it just made you think-

P: That's impossible.

R: "Err, I'm not sure about any of that!" So that's interesting. So when there's a story where you just think, "No, that wouldn't happen, it's not like that," that just switches you off it?

P: Yeah, because like in - in stories about God, like, there's impossible things. That's why I don't mostly believe it.

Comment [E264]: Inclusive

R: So do you think God doesn't do impossible things?

P: Well, yeah. Because if he does then that's just weird, sometimes, to me, but.

R: What does God do then?

P: Well, he can send people to - save people, but not make sea blood.

R: Ah, so he - some of the things he can do, so he can-

P: Yeah, talk to people in their minds, but not like, set a bush on fire like that. [Clicks.]

R: So, the physical things God can't do, but he can communicate with people?

P: Yeah.

R: Why - sorry, I'm going off on a track now.

P: Yeah I know.

R: Why do you think people pray, if they think he can't do things?

P: I don't know.

R: Do you ever pray?

P: Nah.

R: No.

P: None of my family do any [of those?] things.

R: So it's not something you do?

P: No.

R: Now, interestingly, from what you've said, in this story, it was - so there was a burning bush, but if we put that to one side, you said that God can talk to people, and God said to Moses, "I want you to do this thing, to go and save these people," which is something else you said. Um, and Moses was like, "No, no I can't," and he said, "You can." Do you think that is something that could happen?

P: Yeah.

R: So if we took that bit of the story, did that make you think of anything? Or feel anything?

P: Well yeah a bit, because I was at this place once - well, I think it was Royal Banham Zoo, and they had this massive slide. One part of my body was saying "no" and one part of my body was saying "yes."

**Comment [E265]:** Making connections to understand the past

R: And what did you end up doing?

P: Not doing it.

R: You didn't do it?

P: No, because it was like fifty metres high.

R: So it reminded you a bit of that? Which is interesting, because you didn't want to do a drawing from this, or respond to it, and I think you found it quite difficult - the idea of doing something when you weren't sure. Is that - is that right? Was it - sorry, did you want to tell me anything? Was that a deep sigh.

P: Maybe a little bit. Because the slide was like straight and then curved, and then -

R: So like the slide?

P: Yeah, like that, but...like that.

R: Did, um, so how did you feel when there was this Collective Worship saying you could do, like Moses did do it?

P: Well when you said I could I was like, "I don't have to." So I decided not to, because, I didn't really have anything to respond to it.

**Comment [E266]:** No reflection

R: So it's interesting because I think, yeah, you felt that you weren't sure what you could do, so you weren't sure how to respond. Has it made you think that you could do something, or did it reinforce that I'm not sure I can?

P: I don't know. I don't know.

R: Not sure. It would be interesting with the starfish, here, that it did, a bit. That you did think of something you could do, but that's sometimes hard because your mum doesn't always let you. Good. If we pop those away. So we've got the responses. So you started to have a look. Is there one that you'd like to tell me about? So the final one. So you said you weren't sure why you created it - you hadn't planned to create a football.

P: No.

R: So why did you create a football do you think?

P: Well...it was what you wanted in life.

R: What you're searching for.

P: And I want - um, I was searching for a good new football, because you can't really find any good football - you can't really find footballs anywhere now, so it is a bit lucky if you find one, and I want a new one, because my one's getting flat and old. It's the one I got from the - is it the "kick" thing?

**Comment [E267]:** Literal reflection

R: Oh, yes.

P: That, and I didn't even get forty pounds raised, I only raised four pounds.

R: So it got confused.

P: Yeah.

R: But I remember Miss X said it's fine.

P: So I got it for free. Near enough.

R: Well you still raised some didn't you?

P: Four pounds.

R: So, that's something you're kind of physically searching for. Did it make you think of anything you're searching for in a different way?

P: Well...I'm searching for my mum and dad to make up a bit more, because they're still arguing a bit.

**Comment [E268]:** Reconsidering the future

R: Yeah, and that's hard. Yeah, so there are different things that we search for aren't there? There's, kind of physical things we want to have - material things - and there's also things that are more to do with who we are on the inside. And what about - can you tell me about this one? So this was the starfish one. So you drew a starfish and you wrote something on it.

P: I can't even - I can't even see it. "For everyone to be happy, for animals to be safe in the world."

**Comment [E269]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So what were those things?

P: Well, normally people are normally in a mood, when I wake up, especially my mum. And then, animals aren't normally safe, especially in America.

**Comment [E270]:** Reconsidering the future

R: So they're things that you really want to try and do something about in the world?

P: Yeah.

R: Thank you very much. So, we've done some thinking about spirituality in RE lessons, and there's some different ways we could maybe think about it here. One is that we have kind of a life journey, we grow older, we might go to university, get a job or a family. There's also a spiritual journey which is how our beliefs or our thoughts or our awareness of God or what we think develops. That's the spiritual journey. [Interruption.] I'll just go for a second. [Pause.] There's also some food - so other people think about the fact that we need food for our body to make sure our body grows and is healthy, but there's also a different sort of food, something that we need for our soul. And then other people think about the fact there's an outer self that people see, but also an inner self, that we don't always show to other people. Does one of those make sense to you more than the others?

P: That one.

R: The outer self and the inner self. So I was just wondering if any of the class assemblies helped you to develop or think about something for your inner self?

P: Not really. Except from the animal soft spot. Because I don't really embrace that at all. I try to, but, like, I just can't say my feelings.

**Comment [E271]:** Requiring response

R: Yeah, so you find it hard to say your feelings?

P: Yeah.

R: But did it help you to think on the inside?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah. Even if you didn't show it on the outside. That one. Thank you. Is there any way - because you've said that you do believe in God, but not all of these things that he can do. Were there any moments which helped you with that belief in God, or any that made it more difficult?

P: I don't understand.

R: So, if you - so you have this belief in God, that you say, but you're not really - there's not other things but you don't kind of follow a particular religion, or believe a particular thing, so I was just wondering whether there was anything that helped your beliefs or made you believe a bit more or made you believe a bit less. Or whether it just stayed the same.

P: I don't know...because...I just don't know.

R: You're not really sure?

P: No.

R: So it didn't make it less, but didn't make it more.

P: Yeah.

R: That's fine because, like, things, we're all different and different things help us all. So I've finally got, I've got a blob tree here, which you might have seen before?

P: Ah yeah.

R: And I was just wondering which one do you think best describes you during the acts of Collective Worship, and can you explain - so can you pick one and can you explain why you've picked?

P: It's a bit of two.

R: You can pick two, that's easy.

P: Think it's a bit of three, I don't know.

R: Go on then, as long as we're quick.

P: That one, because sometimes I just feel grumpy on some days and I just can't be bothered to listen and don't really understand much.

**Comment [E272]:** No response

R: So on a day when you're feeling a bit grumpy then you stay feeling like that?

P: Yeah. And, that one, because sometimes I do feel like the top of the world while I'm doing it.

**Comment [E273]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: Is there a moment where you felt like the top of the world? When you were doing it?

P: Well...a bit. I just can't remember when. I do remember once, but I just can't remember when.

R: So there was a moment, where you suddenly felt the top of the world?

P: Yeah, but I just can't remember now.

R: So, it's an interesting mix isn't it? You kind of take your emotions in - into the class assembly, but occasionally it just gets you to the top of the world. You said there was a third, has that third one gone?

P: [Taps.]

R: So then the falling one. Hmmm. Can you explain that one.

P: Er no I just picked that one for fun!

R: Just for fun?

P: Yeah.

R: So there's not really a reason behind it?

P: No.

R: Falling from a tree.

P: Yeah.

R: So we'll stick with those two, and one added for fun. So did you like having the assemblies?

P: Some of them.

R: Some of them. Which ones did you like having?

P: Like...was the starfish a made up story?

R: Um, it - I think it is, but I don't actually know. So, they usually come from - they usually come from - stories often come from some truth though, so there's probably some truth in there.

P: They do in like myths and legends.

R: So, you liked the assembly with the starfish. Was there another one you liked?

P: Um...I don't think so. Maybe the one with Daniel. The one with Daniel's...I can't remember his name. Is it Daniel?

R: Alfie. With the hat.

P: Yeah Alfie. Yeah.

R: So you liked those two. So did you prefer the ones where the story wasn't religious?

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah?

P: Yeah, because I always think those ones about God that says that he can do stuff, like I said, I don't believe he can do certain things.

Comment [E274]: Inclusive

R: Do you believe you can still take something from that? Like some of the other part from it, or do you think that you have to have the whole?

P: I have to have a whole, just to, like, fully understand.

Comment [E275]: Inclusive

R: Mmm. Yeah, so ones where it's more about the world and other people, which we can imagine, they're a bit easier than when we have to look at ourselves and we have to think about what - or who God might be? Is that right?

P: Yep.

R: So you find it easier when they're about others in the world? So do you think if there was a story from Christianity, but it was about others or it was about the world that would be easier?

P: Er, yeah.

R: And, did - so we don't have much time in school, so do you think they're a good use of time?

P: Well, yeah, because instead of doing, like, certain things, we could do, like - because we spend ages on one lesson, a lot of people get fed up on the same lesson. Like, every day, at the same time, we like to have a bit of a mix up.

R: So this is a different thing that we can have? Why is it good to have this different thing and not something else?

P: Because a lot of - a lot of people do - some people do like it, but some people don't. Because, like, me, I - sometimes I think I'm dyslexic, but only in literacy.

R: That's interesting. So you've said some people like the class assemblies and some people don't.

P: Yeah.

R: So, um, do you think - would you still like to have them. If it was a choice between not having them at all or having them.

P: Sometimes.

R: So you'd sometimes want to have them?

P: Yeah, not always, not every Tuesday. Maybe like once every two weeks.

**Comment [E276]:** No other time

R: So have them slightly less often?

P: Yeah.

R: So they're not worth every week.

P: No.

R: But they are still worth having.

P: Yeah.

R: What is it about them that makes them worth having?

P: Well, sometimes you can just let your emotions go sometimes. And sometimes you just sit there in the quiet. And I like peace and quiet, so...

**Comment [E277]:** Requiring response

**Comment [E278]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: So it's good for some peace and quiet and let your emotions go. Do you feel you can just let them go?

P: Sometimes.

R: That's good. One person said that when they went and put them - when they went and put them in the bowl or something, it felt like they could let them go.

P: Yeah.

R: Does that ring true for you?

P: A bit.

R: But you could think about them?

P: Yeah.

R: But then let them go? And do you - is that a good thing to do?

P: Yeah.

R: So final one: if we could only keep one thing about them, what would we - what would you keep about the class assemblies we've done?

P: Can I say something we should keep and something we should not?

R: Yeah, go for it.

P: We should keep the candle, because the smoke at the end, it does really - I can't remember what you say now?

**Comment [E279]:** Marked/bounded

R: Something about everything that's happened going with us.

P: Yeah.

R: Yeah?

P: Yeah.

R: You like that idea? Mmm. What is it about that idea that you like?

P: Because sometimes you can just smell it, and it really gives you like, sometimes a happy feeling, because it smells nice.

**Comment [E280]:** Feeling a sense of calm or peace

R: So it's that happy feeling you get with it.

P: Yeah.

R: Do you like it when it's lit? Or do you just like it-

P: I like it when it's lit, but I would like, like, I would like us to do it. Like, the kids.

**Comment [E281]:** Marked/bounded

R: You'd like to light it?

P: Yeah.

R: So do you like the fact that the children put it out as well?

P: Yeah.



R: Wonderful. And you said you wanted to get rid of one thing. Very quickly what would you get rid of?

P: I dunno.

R: You haven't thought of it?

P: No.

R: Well if you do you can let me know tomorrow, because we'd better go.

Appendix B: 'Record of Collective Worship Experiences' Observation Logs (Coded)

**Teacher's Record of Collective Worship Experiences**

Name of Teacher: <i>BR</i>	Class: <i>Year 5</i>	Collective worship Focus: <i>[Q1 - unique]</i>	
Date: <i>11/1/14</i>	Time Started: <i>1.00</i>	Time Finished: <i>1.22</i>	Number of Pupils: <i>10</i>
		Other adults: <i>1 work experience</i>	

**Opening:**  
Were the children engaged at the start of the collective worship? Why do you think this was?  
*They were quite engaged. They liked choosing a story but were distracted and lost atmosphere from this activity.*

**Stimulus:**  
How did the children react during the story? (Were they engaged/ bored? Interested/ not?)  
*Really interested by Paralympic athlete. Recognised story of Moses.*

Did any child(ren) stand out as reacting differently?  
*He could not settle (was having a difficult afternoon).*

Did they comment on any part of the story as it was being told?  
*One commented they have thought there are things they couldn't do.*

**Response:**  
Please note the different responses you can recall to the 'I wonder' questions:

1. *Why is it not burning up?  
Is there a message?  
It's on fire but it isn't burning.*
2. *Frightened, thought he couldn't do it, it's too hard,  
his brother Aaron had to speak for him (own knowledge)*
3. *He wouldn't do it - I don't know what would change his mind.  
I think he would*

How many different pupils responded to the questions? *Q1 - 3 answers, Q2 - 6 (most had ideas), Q3 - 3 answers (most had ideas).*

Did you feel there was generally agreement or a variety of responses amongst the pupils?  
*Q1 & 2 - Yes. Q3 - No. [Think for yourself]*

How did the children respond to the time of quiet, stillness or silence? Did they focus on something? Did they look around?  
Would you say they were engaged?  
*All were engaged except Matthew. He did not look at his hands and crossed his hands. [Think for yourself]*

How did the children respond to the written activity?  
*All enjoyed it but became quite noisy!*

Did they all create something?  
*Matthew didn't, he said he didn't want to. When I asked him why he said he didn't think anything made him special. I asked if there was anything he wanted to achieve and he said no. I said he had to set goals and listen. I later saw him looking at his hands on his hands.*

What different types of responses were created?  
*Lots of hands - responding to an idea given. [Good response to thinking]  
Drew pictures, lines, words about themselves, family [did not write a bit]*

**Closing:**  
Were the children engaged at the end of the collective worship? Why do you think this was?  
*Less so - we had to be quick and collecting up responses was difficult.*

Teacher's Record of Collective Worship Experiences

Overall Comments	DATE 11/1/14
How would you describe the atmosphere during the act of collective worship? Did this change during the act, if so, how?	
<p><i>They were generally engaged, except Matthew times. They enjoyed responding to the 'wonder' questions. [Says for yourself]</i></p>	
Did any moments or responses stand out to you as significant; if so, what were they?	
<p><i>Matthew looking at his hands and reflecting, despite saying he didn't want to respond. [Squinting eyes]</i></p>	
Were any moments difficult for you and/or the children; if so, what were they?	
<p><i>Matthew - possibly started to react at the religious story. [Squinting]</i></p>	
Did any of the children make a comment about the collective worship; if so, what were they?	
<p><i>No.</i></p>	
If any other adults were in the room, did they make any comments about the collective worship; if so, what were they?	
<p><i>Thank you, that was good. (Possibly this was about the whole afternoon though.)</i></p>	
Do you think all, some or none of the children may have been spiritually affected by the time of collective worship? What makes you think this?	
<p><i>Some - I think Matthew responded about his uniqueness. All <sup>others</sup> produced a reflection and seemed glad to create a response. Seemed to like the 'wonder' questions and the story.</i></p>	
Any other comments / reflections?	
<p><i>I may try putting responses away as they leave.</i></p>	

Teacher's Record of Collective Worship Experiences

Name of Teacher: <i>CR</i>	Class: <i>Year 5</i>	Collective worship Focus: <i>Others - giving to others</i>	
Date: <i>18/2/14</i>	Time Started: <i>2.55</i>	Time Finished: <i>3.22</i>	Number of Pupils: <i>26</i>
		Other adults: <i>-</i>	

**Opening:** [Marked/rounded]

Were the children engaged at the start of the collective worship? Why do you think this was?  
*They enjoyed clapping stones and liked the lighting of the candle. They seemed engaged at different moments ways to view the candle. Olivia changed interest at different times or statements.*

**Stimulus:**

How did the children react during the story? (Were they engaged/bored? Interested/not? Etc.)  
*Several had their heads on their desks. They looked up (became more interested?) as the story went on.* [Eating a variety of things]

Did any children stand out as reacting differently?  
*I left them. If space or peace was important, I thought it was ok to leave them.*

Did they comment on any part of the story as it was being told?  
*No, but I thought they particularly liked the ending with the dog in the hat as they responded to this idea.*

**Response:**

Please note the different responses you can recall to the 'I wonder' questions:

- The dog had a place to sleep.*
- The millman didn't get wet*
- Mrs Mobbly could give the hat away!*
- He thought the millman didn't like his gift.*
- He'd liked the hat but had given it away. Now it seemed the man didn't appreciate it.*
- Happy the dog had the hat, but the millman didn't want to use it. Jealous that the millman had a dog, maybe if he'd kept the hat, he'd have got the dog.*

How many different pupils responded to the questions?  
*Q1 - 4 answers, Q2 - 6 answers, Q3 - 3 answers.*

Did you feel there was generally agreement or a variety of responses amongst the pupils?  
*They generally agreed. Perhaps the most difference was with the last question and whether Alfie would be happy or not that the millman had given away his hat.*

How did the children respond to the time of quiet, stillness or silence? Did they focus on something? Did they look around?  
 Would you say they were engaged?  
*Several didn't engage with the hands - one didn't do it, several laughed and tried to catch each other's eyes.*

How did the children respond to the written activity?  
*They were all quite focused when holding the candle, thinking of a 'thanks' and what they could give.* [Marked/rounded]

Did they all create something?  
*I wasn't certain all were a response - they may have just wanted to hold anything.*

Did they settle into the activity quickly?  
*Some struggled to start.*

What different types of responses were created?  
*Scents, tissue paper flowers.* [Marked/rounded]

**Closing:**

Were the children engaged at the end of the collective worship? Why do you think this was?  
*They enjoyed watching the candle be snuffed and they seemed to connect with the smoke going out like they would. (Some didn't want to stop the responding activity!)* [Marked/rounded]

Teacher's Record of Collective Worship Experiences

Overall Comments	Other, 18/2/19
<p>How would you describe the atmosphere during the act of collective worship? Did this change during the act, if so, how?</p> <p>- The children were quite <sup>quiet</sup> (it had been a long busy day!)</p> <p>- They engaged most in lighting the candle, the story, and 'I wonder' questions.</p>	
<p>Did any moments or responses stand out to you as significant, if so, what were they?</p> <p>- One child wanted to light the candle. <sup>(Marked it as a bit)</sup></p> <p>- All the children who hadn't <sup>summed</sup> <del>summed</del> <sup>classroom</sup> a stone wanted to. <sup>to get something</sup></p> <p>- Were the children with their heads on desks still engaged?</p>	
<p>Were any moments difficult for you and/or the children, if so, what were they?</p> <p>- The ending was rushed.</p> <p>- Some children didn't know what to create. <sup>to respond</sup></p> <p>- I was a bit worried they felt the story was babyish and would go off task - they didn't touch.</p>	
<p>Did any of the children make a comment about the collective worship, if so, what were they?</p> <p>Haira gave me a bunch of tissue paper flowers saying, "I made these for you" <sup>flourishy response</sup> <sup>[excitement in the future]</sup></p>	
<p>If any other adults were in the room, did they make any comments about the collective worship, if so, what were they?</p> <p>n/a</p>	
<p>Do you think all, some or none of the children may have been spiritually affected by the time of collective worship? What makes you think this?</p> <p>Uncertain.</p>	
<p>Any other comments / reflections?</p> <p>As this came after a long, tiring day (with an observed lesson, trip to the local secondary school and a short lunch), I was impressed they still settled. Though they were less engaged than last week.</p> <p><sup>continued</sup></p>	

Teacher's Record of Collective Worship Experiences

Name of Teacher: ER	Class: Year 5	Collective worship Focus: Abraham - Making a difference.		
Date: 25/3/19	Time Started: 2.55	Time Finished: 3.22	Number of Pupils: 25	Other adults: -

**Opening:**

Were the children engaged at the start of the collective worship? Why do you think this was?

They were generally engaged. They asked if a child could light the candle. Two stared out of the window (but Year 6 were outside making lots of noise.)

**Stimulus:**

How did the children react during the story? (Were they engaged/bores? Interested/not? Etc.)

They were quite focused all the way through but were noticeably more engaged (still looking at the pictures) at the end, when I said, "It makes a difference to that one."

Did any child(ren) stand out as reacting differently? Aisha was fiddling and coughing and had her head on the desk - but her written response showed she was still engaged.

**Response:**

Please note the different responses you can recall to the 'I wonder' questions:

- I won't be able to do anything.  
I should do something.  
That is terrible.
- What is she doing?  
I should help her.  
She's never going to save them all.
- I have to keep going.  
Maybe someone will help me.

Mark to go on!

How many different pupils responded to the questions?

Q1 - 6 responses, Q2 - 4 responses, Q3 - 5 responses

Did you feel there was generally agreement or a variety of responses amongst the pupils?

There was some variation in terms of whether they thought it was too much for the girl to keep going; others varied in whether they thought someone might help them.

How did the children respond to the time of quiet, stillness or silence? Did they focus on something? Did they look around? Would you say they were engaged?

They listened quietly to the music. [Great point! (Mark to go on!)]

How did the children respond to the written activity?

They liked having the idea of the starfish as a starting point. [Great response]

Did they all create something?

Yes.

Did they settle into the activity quickly?

Yes, though a bit nervously. Listening to the music quietened them once more. [Great point]

What different types of responses were created?

One prayer (Abraham), some created a starfish with what they would save. + One interesting discussion: Ollie thought he'd like to save his PlayStation 3 (A

claim: [great point] said to him) Lewis responded, "What about the Earth?" Ollie thought about this and then added a drawing of the world to his written response.

Were the children engaged at the end of the collective worship? Why do you think this was?

I changed snuffing out the candle to before collecting in the responses. It was hard to get them to stop but then they seemed to focus on the music being. They liked a child snuffing out the candle - many wanted to do it. The children made clear decisions about whether to put responses in a bowl or display class.

Mark to go on!

Teacher's Record of Collective Worship Experiences

Overall Comments	World 18/3/10
How would you describe the atmosphere during the act of collective worship? Did this change during the act, if so, how?	
<p>They were generally engaged, especially at the point in the story when the girl explained why she threw the starfish back. (They were quieter, focused, looking at the picture.)</p>	
Did any moments or responses stand out to you as significant, if so, what were they?	
<p>Ahita appeared to be disengaged (coughing &amp; fiddling) but wrote a prayer for her written response.</p>	
<p>Oliver did not seem fully engaged from his interaction with Sanjiv. It suggests he had not thought too deeply about what he would want to save in the world.</p>	
Were there any moments difficult for you and/or the children, if so, what were they?	
<p>Not memorably</p>	
Did any of the children make a comment about the collective worship, if so, what were they?	
<p>One commented on enjoying that collective worship.</p>	
If any other adults were in the room, did they make any comments about the collective worship, if so, what were they?	
<p>n/a</p>	
Do you think all, some or none of the children may have been spiritually affected by the time of collective worship? What makes you think this?	
<p>Most - I think more were spiritually engaged than in other times of collective worship. They were focused, found it easier to create a written response and did so with lots of enthusiasm. (disappointing response)</p>	
Any other comments / reflections?	
<p>-</p>	



Teacher's Record of Collective Worship Experiences

Name of Teacher: ER	Class: Year 5	Collective worship Focus: God - searching for meaning
Date: 1/4/14	Time Started: 11:56	Time Finished: 12:15
	Number of Pupils: 24	Other adults: EM, JC

**Opening:** (Some stayed later)

Were the children engaged at the start of the collective worship? Why do you think this was?  
The children were all very tired from a morning in the hall. They seemed focused at the lighting of the candle but then five had their heads on their desks. [No reflection]

**Stimulus:** How did the children react during the story? (Were they engaged/bored? Interested/not? Etc.)  
A couple looked out of the window. Many had their heads on desks (5). [No reflection]

Did any child(ren) stand out as reacting differently?  
No - most seemed tired and confused

Did they comment on any part of the story as it was being told?  
No, they were different from before - quieter, less focused on the story, less reactive.

**Responses:**  
Please note the different responses you can recall to the 'I wonder' questions:

- [No reflection]
- # was quiet. I'm confused, I thought God was everywhere. [Experiences diff. one belief]
- [No reflection]

How many different pupils responded to the questions?  
Q1 - 0 responses, Q2 - 2 responses, Q3 - 0 responses.

Did you feel there was generally agreement or a variety of responses amongst the pupils?  
A sense of uncertainty. ....

How did the children respond to the time of quiet, stillness or silence? Did they focus on something? Did they look around?  
Would you say they were engaged?  
- Many focused on the candle, it was quiet. [focal point]  
- Some seemed less settled - uncertain what to think about? [No reflection]

How did the children respond to the written activity?  
- Some didn't know what to do. Eg. Ollie: I'm searching for my game I've lost. [No reflection]

Did they all create something?  
I asked not to create anything. [No reflection]

Did they settle into the activity quickly?  
Explained how not to if they reflected they did but they checked. Reasonably but quite noisy. [No reflection]

What different types of responses were created?  
Mainly pictures especially of Elijah in the story. [No reflection]

Suggests less certainty of own reflections?

**Closing:**  
Were the children engaged at the end of the collective worship? Why do you think this was?  
Yes. They understood reflecting on the candle as a quiet time. [No reflection]

Some children stayed to finish what they were creating. [No reflection]



Teacher's Record of Collective Worship Experiences

Overall Comments	God. 1/4/14
<p>How would you describe the atmosphere during the act of collective worship? Did this change during the act, if so, how?</p> <p><i>It was not a great atmosphere. The children were very tired after the talent show and I was quite stressed and upset from dealing with a pupil.</i></p> <p>Did any moments or responses stand out to you as significant, if so, what were they?</p> <p><i>- A girl I had upset wrote about being sad in her response and made paper tears for others to know if they felt sad.</i> [Inquiring response]</p>	
<p>Were any moments difficult for you and/or the children; if so, what were they?</p> <p><i>The start - for reason above.</i></p> <p><i>The children seemed confused by the story as they didn't have verbal written responses and found it hard to create a written response.</i> [no reflection]</p>	
<p>Did any of the children make a comment about the collective worship; if so, what were they?</p> <p><i>n/a</i></p>	
<p>If any other adults were in the room, did they make any comments about the collective worship; if so, what were they?</p> <p><i>One TA commented: "They all go quiet when you strike the match."</i> [planned/rounded]</p>	
<p>Do you think all, some or none of the children may have been spiritually affected by the time of collective worship? What makes you think this?</p> <p><i>I think they were less spiritually affected because of the difficult circumstances before the worship and perhaps as the concept was more abstract and difficult to reflect on?</i></p> <p><i>- Was there an impact of using a religious story?</i> [no, but ok]</p> <p>Any other comments / reflections?</p> <p><i>-</i></p>	

## Appendix C: Semi-structured Interview Schedule

### Warm up questions:

1. How are you today?
2. What lesson were you just having?
3. What did you have for breakfast?

### Questions about class collective worship / assemblies:

4. We've had some different class assemblies in the last few weeks. Have you noticed anything about them?
5. Is there anything that you think has been different?
6. Here are some words about some of the things in our class assemblies.

Prompts given: Drawing, Questions, Candle, I wonder..., Story, Music, Silence, Stillness, Reflecting, Prayer, Words, Ideas, Thinking, Space, Pebbles, Beginning, Ending, Together

- a. Pick one word that describes which was your favourite part of the assembly and explain why you've chosen that word.
  - b. (Your least favourite?)
7. Here are four pictures that are connected to each of the four class assemblies we have had. Can you pick one and tell me a bit about that assembly? What did we do in the assembly, what did you think about, how did you feel?

Prompt given:



8. (Do you want to tell me about another one as well?)
9. Here are the responses you made in the 4 assemblies. Can you pick one and tell me why you made this response? Do you still think it's important?

Prompt given: Written responses the pupils had created themselves in each spiritual collective worship.

10. Some people might describe our spirituality in different ways. Some say, just like we are one a journey through childhood, school, university, job, we are also on a spiritual journey. Others say we need food for our body and also 'food' (something different) for our soul. Others still might say we have an outer self and an inner self. Which way makes sense to you?

Prompt given:



A life journey and a spiritual journey

Food for the body, food for the soul

An outer self and an inner self

11. Did any of the assemblies and any part of the assembly help you develop or think about your spiritual journey/food for your soul/inner self? How?
12. I've got a blob tree here. Which blob best describes you during the collective worship? Can you tell me more about why?

Prompt given:



Reproduced from Wilson,P. & Long, I. (2009). *The big book of blob trees*. Oxon: Speechmark

13. Did you like having these assemblies? Why/why not?
14. We don't have much time in school. Do you think they were a good use of time?  
Why/why not?
15. If you could only keep one thing, what would it be?

# Appendix D: Collective Worship Plans and Stories

Bible / Passage to Consider	Questions	Catechesis / Our understand and practices	Closing
<p><b>Opening</b></p> <p>Light the candle with these words:</p> <p>As we come together, let light be kindled.</p> <p>If you are Christian, you may trust the light of the cross, shining not everywhere.</p> <p>If you are a Jew, you may trust the light of the menorah, the presence of God in the world.</p> <p>If you are an agnostic, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of a God.</p> <p>If you are an atheist, the light may make you consider what meaning there is in the world.</p>	<p><b>Wonder</b></p> <p>What if you ever wondered what a special about you? Have you ever wondered you could be different? Have you ever thought there was something you couldn't do?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Jude Ben-Hanan was born with glaucoma and a genetic eye condition. She had a vision and a ritual impairment but became near blind by the age of 17. I wonder if she ever considered if anything was special about her? I wonder if she ever wished she was different.</p> <p>But on Saturday, Jude (with her guide) took in four of her tubers for the day, and the support of many around her) was there and broke, doing at the Winter Paralympics! I wonder if she ever thought of a better one.....</p> <p>There's a story from Judaism and Christianity about Moses, you may have heard it before. I wonder, what message might you take from this story? .....</p> <p>One day, Moses was taking care of his brother Aaron, Aaron's Moses was over a bush and on fire but it wasn't burning up. "This is strange," he thought. "Why isn't the bush burning up?" It's so clear and real."</p> <p>When the Lord saw that Moses was listening closely, he turned to him from inside of the bush and said, "Moses! Moses!"</p> <p>He answered, "Yes, here I am."</p> <p>God said, "I have seen how much my people are being treated in Egypt. I have heard their cry and now come to rescue them. Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of the country."</p> <p>But Moses said to God, "I am nobody, how can I go to the king and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" Don't send me."</p> <p>God answered, "I will be with you. Now to the king of Egypt you may go with you, but it is also who can convince the king and lead my people to freedom."</p>	<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>I wonder, what do you think Moses thought when he saw the burning bush?</p> <p>I wonder, why do you think Moses asked God not to send him?</p> <p>I wonder, do you think Moses went into the wild why?</p> <p>Hold one hand out in front of you. Look at the lines on your hand. Each line is unique to you. Do you have any scars? What experiences have shaped you?</p> <p>Look at one fingertip. Think of something that makes you special.</p> <p>How does an another fingertip, what do you want to achieve?</p> <p>As we continue to look at our hands, we will listen to this story.</p> <p>"Think, O LORD, on all my suffering and what I suffer!"</p> <p><b>CHORUS</b> The ruler of Egypt at the Pharaoh made a written response— (they could not understand the hand and were afraid that we would do them an evil thing) (they were)!</p> <p>How can the message on your hands be required to what we have thought about.</p> <p>After a few minutes, invite the children to draw and place their responses over the candle— either on a strip of or the board.</p> <p>Help us to be the people we are, and to know we can grow to help one may not really.</p>	<p><b>Closing</b></p> <p>As we close out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers and our God speaking back, ready to go with us.</p> <p>Let us go with them, filled with love.</p>

### *Moses' special job*

One day, Moses was taking care of his flock of sheep. Suddenly Moses saw that a bush was on fire but it was not burning up. "This is strange," he thought. "Why isn't the bush burning up? I'll go closer and see."

When the LORD saw that Moses was coming closer, he called to him from the middle of the bush and said, "Moses! Moses!"

He answered, "Yes, here I am."

God said, "I have seen how cruelly my people are being treated in Egypt; I have heard them cry out and have come to rescue them. Now I am sending you to the king of Egypt so that you can lead my people out of his country."

But Moses said to God, "I am nobody. How can I go to the king and bring the Israelites out of Egypt? Don't send me."

God answered, "I will be with you. You're brother Aaron may go with you, but it is you who can convince the king and lead my people to freedom."

Adapted from the Bible: Exodus 3

Theme: Understanding Humanity - Others		CW Focus: Helping others	
<p><b>Opening</b></p> <p>Light the candle with these words:            As we come together, we light this candle.</p> <p>If you see Christ, you may think the light is the love, shining out everywhere.</p> <p>If you see a spark, you may think the light symbolizes the presence of God in the world.</p> <p>If you see an agonist, the glowing light may make you wonder about the existence of a God.</p> <p>If you see an atheist, the light may make you consider what meaning there is in the world.</p>	<p><b>Materials</b></p> <p>Why does it matter to notice other people and help them? What does it mean to give and receive?</p> <p>Read the story about Mr. Alchiboly's hat - the hat being given to different people who could use it.</p>	<p><b>Response</b></p> <p>I wonder, who do you think was helped in this story?</p> <p>I wonder, why do you think Alchiboly was upset?</p> <p>I wonder, how do you think Alchiboly felt at the end of the story?</p> <p>Hold both your hands out, look at one of your hands. Think of someone who has helped you. What did you receive from them? Imagine how it feels in your hand. Now imagine passing it to your other hand. You've received something, now can you share that? What could you give to someone else?</p> <p>You'll have one minute of silence - you might want to think about something you are thankful for receiving, or something you could give.</p> <p>Now use the materials on your tables to respond to what we have thought about.</p> <p>After a few minutes, invite the children to come and place their responses near the candle - either as a display or in the basket.</p> <p>Help us to be open to receive from others, and to give to them in return.</p>	<p><b>Closing</b></p> <p>As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.</p> <p>Let us go with hearts filled with love.</p>
<p><b>Notes / Points to Consider:</b></p> <p>Some children may find it hard to imagine receiving something into their hands. If this is the case, you may want some jabbas[or similar] to be something they can actually receive and give.</p>			



## *Mr McNally's Hat*

One morning Mum took Alfie across the street to be looked after by Mrs McNally. That morning Mrs McNally was having what she called 'a good clear out'. So she and Alfie started sorting the bog cupboard. At last, from the very back of the cupboard, Mrs McNally brought out a large black hat.

"Goodness, there's that awful hat!" she said, dusting it off with her sleeve and holding it up to the light.

The hat looked quite new. Mrs McNally told Alfie that Mr McNally had bought it to wear at a very special occasion to 'give him height'. But she didn't think the hat suited Mr McNally at all well so it had hung on a peg unused and then put in a cupboard where it had got forgotten about. Alfie thought the hat was a very good hat indeed and when Mum came to collect him, Mrs McNally said he had been so helpful all morning, that if he liked he could take the hat home. Alfie like Mr McNally's hat so much that he wore it for the rest of the day and at bedtime, put the hat carefully at the bottom of his bed.

The next morning he wore the hat to Nursery School. At break time all the other children crowded round Alfie and he let them take turns trying it on. They then invented a game where the person who was wearing the hat ran about, chasing other people. For the next few days, Alfie wore the hat a lot. When he got tired of wearing it, he put it at the bottom of the toy cupboard where he kept his special things. Annie Rose found it there and made it into a bed for her lamb. But soon they both forgot about it.

One of Alfie's very good friends was the milkman. One very wet morning, when rain was pouring down, Alfie looked out of the window and noticed the milkman's hair was soaking and raindrops were dripping down his nose and off the end of his beard. Then Alfie had a thought. While Mum was paying the milkman, Alfie went to the toy cupboard and brought out Mr McNally's hat.

"Here's a present for you," he said, holding it out. "It's to keep your head dry."

"Thanks a lot," said the milkman. "That's a good hat that is." Then he clapped it onto his head, went off down the steps and drove off.

But the next time Alfie saw the milkman, he wasn't wearing the hat. Nor the time after that.

"Doesn't he like the hat I gave him?" Alfie asked Mum anxiously. But Mum said:

"Oh, I'm sure he likes it a lot. It's just the weather's been fine. I expect he's keeping it for a rainy day."

But the next time it rained, Alfie saw the milkman still wasn't wearing the hat! He was so upset that he burst into tears. The milkman saw his sad face at the window and rang the doorbell.

"What's up mate?" the milkman asked Alfie.

"You aren't wearing the hat I gave you," sobbed Alfie.

"Come along with me and you'll see why not."

Then Mum helped Alfie put on his mac and his boots and he went down to the milk float. The milkman hoisted Alfie up so he could see. There on the seat was the hat and inside was a little puppy, curled up fast asleep, with his paws over his nose.

"He's a stray," the milkman told Alfie. "A lady up the street found him on her doorstep, all wet and shivering, so I took him along with me. He just got into that hat and settled down as though he'd slept in it all his life. If nobody claims him, I'll keep him."



Just then the puppy opened his eyes and licked Alfie's hand. At that moment, Alfie couldn't think of a better use for Mr McNally's hat.

Adapted from: Hughes, S. (1990). *The big Alfie and Annie Rose story book*. London: Random House

<b>Theme: Understanding Humanity - Word</b>			
<b>Opening</b>	<b>Ministry</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Closing</b>
<p>All we come together, we light the candle.</p> <p>Light the candle</p> <p>If you are Christian, you may think the light is the Jesus, shining out everywhere.</p> <p>If you are a atheist, you may think the light symbolizes the presence of God in the world.</p> <p>If you are an agnostic, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of a God.</p> <p>If you are an atheist, the light may make you consider what meaning there is in the world.</p> <p>Or the candle may have a particular meaning for you today.</p>	<p>Have you ever wondered what difference you make in the world? Have you ever felt too small and insignificant to do something?</p> <p>There are times when we can feel like there are big problems in the world that we can't do anything about.</p> <p>I wonder, has there ever been a time when you've felt like that?</p> <p>Here's a story about what someone did when faced with a big problem in the world.</p> <p>About the Starfish story.</p>	<p>I wonder, how do you think the girl felt when she first saw all the starfish?</p> <p>I wonder, what did the man think when the girl told him what she was doing?</p> <p>I wonder, how do you think the girl felt when she looked at the starfish the hadn't thrown back?</p> <p>Listen to the music. Is there anything in the world you want to change? What small difference could you make?</p> <p>Now use the materials on your tables to respond to what we have thought about. You might want to draw a starfish and write what you want to change or who you want to help on it.</p> <p>After a few minutes, invite the children to come and give their responses near the candle – either on display or in the basket.</p> <p>Help us to make whatever difference in the world that we can.</p>	<p>All we did to sing our the candle.</p> <p>All we blow out the candle, we may think of our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers spreading out, ready to go with us.</p> <p>Let us go with hearts filled with love, joy and peace.</p>
<b>Notes/ Points to Consider: --</b>			

## *The Starfish Story*

Once there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small girl approaching. As the girl walked, she paused every so often and as she grew closer, the man could see that she was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The girl came closer still and the man called out, “Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?”

The young girl paused, looked up, and replied “Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can’t return to the sea by themselves. When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water.”

The old man replied, “But the beach goes on for miles. There must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. How can your effort make any difference?”

The girl bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she turned, smiled and said, “It made a difference to that one!”

Adapted from: Eiseley, L. C. (1978) *The Star Thrower*. New York: Harvest Books.

Themes: Understanding Symbolism - God			
Opening	Stimulus	Response	Closing
<p>Lighting candles with these words: As we come together, we light this candle.</p> <p>If you are Christian, you may find the light is like Jesus, shining out everywhere.</p> <p>If you are a Jew, you may think the light symbolizes the presence of God in the world.</p> <p>If you are an agnostic, the flickering light may make you wonder about the existence of a God.</p> <p>If you are an atheist, the light may make you consider what meaning there is in the world.</p>	<p>How might we discover the ultimate meaning in our lives? For Christians and Jews, ultimate meaning and purpose comes from God. Where does it come from for you? How can you search for it?</p> <p>Here's a story about an important person for Christians and Jews. You may want to think about what you could take from it.</p> <p>Tap the story of Elijah going to the mountain to find God. God was not in the wind, the earthquake or the fire, he was in a cave, gentle whisper. The angels to support this.</p>	<p>Wonder, why do you think Elijah thought God would be in the wind, earthquake or fire?</p> <p>Wonder, why do you think Elijah found God in the cave?</p> <p>Wonder, what do you think Elijah was doing there?</p> <p>Are there any times when you find it easier to be with God? Or uncomfortable in the meaning or purpose of life? Perhaps, sometimes we just have to ask "to have space to look for meaning, to search for God?"</p> <p>What are you looking for at the moment? How will have I moments of silence to think to ourselves. Perhaps you want to close your eyes, or look at the candle or the picture.</p> <p>How can the whispers in your hearts be required to what we have thought about.</p> <p>The children come and share their responses near the candle.</p> <p>Dear God, help us to find you, or to find meaning in our own lives.</p>	<p>As we blow out the candle, we imagine our thoughts, our ideas, our conversations, perhaps our prayers and our God speaking and, needs to go with us.</p> <p>Let us go with hearts filled with love.</p>
Notes / Points to Consider: ..			

## *Elijah Searching for God*

Elijah was out looking for the Lord in a cave in the mountains.

First there was a furious wind that split the hills and shattered the rocks. Elijah looked for the Lord in the huge fire—but the LORD was not in the wind.

The wind stopped blowing, and then there was an earthquake which shook the mountain to its core. Elijah looked for the Lord in the great earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

After the earthquake there was a fire, raging through the land and burning all that was in its path. Elijah looked for the Lord in the blazing fire—but the LORD was not in the fire.

And after the fire there was silence. Stillness filled the air. Then there was the soft whisper of a voice.

When Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. A voice said to him, “Elijah, what are you doing here?”

Adapted from the Bible: 1 Kings 19:11-13

## Appendix E: Letter sent to all parents offering withdrawal from the study

Dear Parent/Carer,

### RE: Research into Collective Worship

As you may know already, this year I am undertaking a Masters in Education, through the University of Cambridge, with a focus on researching and improving teaching practice. The focus of my thesis is to look at the role of Collective Worship in schools and whether children's spirituality can be developed through this. Both of these elements (collective worship and developing children's spirituality) are required by law, and yet there is very little research for teachers to draw upon.

Over this half term, the children will continue to participate in class collective worship. Observations will be made to record some of their responses, and the worship may be recorded to aid this process. Within the worship, the children will be given the opportunity to create written responses which may then support the interviews of some of children. These interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. All comments and responses will be anonymised and the children's permission for their inclusion will be sought.

If you would like to know anything more about any aspect of the research, please speak to me or X. If you would like your child to be withdrawn from the observations and interviews, then please let your class teacher know by Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March.

Many thanks for your support,

Miss Elisabeth Rutherford

## Appendix F: Additional letter sent to parents of pupils usually withdrawn from Christian collective worship

Dear Parent/Carer,

### RE: Attendance in Collective Worship

As explained in my previous letter, I am undertaking research into school collective worship this year. Presently, your child is withdrawn from Christian collective worship. In order to be inclusive, my class assemblies have therefore focused on using non-religious stories and responses. However, this approach has led to the exclusion of any mention of God.

For the research that I am undertaking, the emphasis will be on developing each child's own sense of spirituality. Every child in the class will therefore be encouraged to respond according to their own beliefs. Therefore, while some Christian and some secular stories may be used, it will be made clear to the child that they can choose how to respond. This is in accordance with advice from the Diocese of Ely, who make it clear that school worship cannot assume children's beliefs but should be open for all to respond however they feel appropriate.

I hope you will be happy for your child to participate in these forms of collective worship. If you have any concerns, please come and speak to me or X. If you would like your child to continue to be withdrawn from all forms of religious collective worship, please let your class teacher know by Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March.

Many thanks for your support,

Miss Elisabeth Rutherford