

GETTING STARTED

Questions for School Leaders, Governors, Teachers and Children to Support Reflection on a New Value at the Start of Term

Church schools often choose to teach Christian values as part of a two-year cycle, focussing on a new value each six week term. Many schools find it helpful to generate conversations amongst children, teachers and governors to ascertain everyone's perspective and understanding of the value before they commence; this can then help in planning which particular aspects of the value might be more appropriate to concentrate on during the term.

The following questions are offered as a starting point for those conversations.

The Imaginor publication *Values Reflection Journals* is recommended as a helpful resource to support teachers and Foundation Governors in evaluating the impact that teaching a value has had on individuals in the community after the teaching is complete, at the end of the term.



GENEROSITY

Acts 20:35: Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.

2 Corinthians 9.7: God loves a cheerful giver

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: There are many forms of generosity. Which are important to you?

- Would you say that your school is characterised by a generosity of spirit?
E.g. Does the school encourage “random acts of kindness”?, How do you show generosity to families who are facing problems?
- In what ways do you as leaders demonstrate your appreciation of the generosity of volunteers in school?
- How do the school and church together respond to crisis and disasters in the world?

Teachers

- How are children encouraged to see their time and talents as gifts with which to bless others?
- Do children have the opportunity to meet with volunteers from the community who give generously of their time?
- What Biblical and Church resources do you use to teach about the generosity of God?
- How are children encouraged to be generous in supporting school charities?
- How are resources from well-known charities, e.g. Christian Aid, used to support teaching and learning?
- Who are the role models, both from centuries past and the present day, that you use to exemplify generosity?

Children

- What does it mean to be generous?
- Does generosity always involve giving money or things?
- How does it feel when you act with generosity towards others by sharing what you have?
- How does it feel when others are generous towards you?
- Who acts with generosity towards you?
- Can you think of a story from the Bible when Jesus showed or taught about generosity?
- When Christians say that they worship a generous God, what do they mean?
- Have you ever made a plan with others about how you might show generosity towards people in trouble?



TRUTHFULNESS

James 3. 17: *The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

Ephesians 4. 15: *Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the Head that is, Christ.*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: Do you believe that there is a truth to be sought or is it just a question of “my truth, your truth”?

- How do you make sure that a true picture of your school is made available for all?
- How are children taught the importance of truthfulness and the ramifications of lying?
- How do you ensure as that truth is always spoken in meetings with respect and sensitivity?

Teachers

- How are children encouraged to see “truth” in others’ points of view?
- How do you help children to have realistic expectations of themselves?
- How do teaching and learning methods (e.g. in Science and RE) help children to engage in a search for truth?
- How are children taught about the importance of truth and truthfulness in your class?
- When do children have the opportunity to learn about “truth-seekers”? (e.g. those who have uncovered “truths” that have helped the progress of humankind.)
- How are playground assistants, play leaders and peer mediators trained to discover “the truth of the matter?”

Children

- Sometimes we are tempted to lie to get out of trouble or make ourselves look better. Why is it important to tell the truth?
- How do you feel when somebody lies to you?
- Is it important to *always* tell the truth?
- When do you have the opportunity to listen to each other’s points of view and how do you learn from this?
- Who helps you decide what is right and wrong?
- When some Christians find it difficult to make a decision, they ask themselves the question “What would Jesus do?”. Why do you think this is helpful for them?



COURAGE

Deuteronomy 31. 6: Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.

2 Timothy 1. 7: For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: What are some of the different types of courage that you have needed to draw upon in your life?

- How does the school encourage children to be courageous in: facing adversity, overcoming fears, admitting failure, standing up for what is right, being themselves?
- Is the governing body resilient enough to resist external pressures when these are not in the best interests of the school? Can you think of times when this resilience has been necessary?
- How does the governing body ensure that a united front is presented when hard decisions have to be taken?
- How does the school support children in resisting discrimination and bullying?
- Does the school have structures and information for pupils so that they know where to go and who to approach when they need help?
- How does the school encourage and support pupils standing for leadership positions? (e.g. school council)

Teachers

- When and how are children celebrated for being courageous?
- How do you help a child in your class who is lacking in confidence or timid?
- When do children learn about those who have been courageous in the school, local community or wider world?
- In what ways can you encourage children to take risks that will advance their learning and understanding?
- How do children in your class learn the importance of encouraging others?
- In what ways does the school help pupils to appreciate that faith in God can give us strength to face adversity and the understanding that we can ask for God's help in prayer?
- Who are the role models that you use to exemplify different kinds of courage from centuries past and in the present day?

Children

- Can you think of a time when you or your friend had to be courageous?
- Sometimes we need to be brave and ask for help when we need it. Who would you ask for help in your school?
- Can you think of a time when you have had the courage "to do the right thing"?
- When has your teacher challenged you to overcome something you were worried about?
- Who or what encourages you to keep on trying when things are difficult at school?
- Why do you think it is important to face up to what we find difficult?
- Can you think of a time when Jesus might have needed courage to keep going?



PERSEVERANCE

Hebrews 12.1: *Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us that is before us.*

Deuteronomy 13.6: *The Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you or forsake you.*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: What encourages you and inspires you to persevere through difficult times?

- When does the school recognise and reward those who show perseverance?
- How does the school help children to understand that patiently persevering through difficult times will ultimately build a resilient character?
- How does the school persevere to help children who are exhibiting challenging behaviour?
- What practical resources does the school draw on to help children who are struggling to succeed and achieve?
- In what ways does the school demonstrate concern and pastoral care for children who are experiencing emotional trauma or upheaval over a sustained period?

Teachers

- What strategies do you use to help children persevere when they are finding schoolwork difficult?
- How do you encourage children to support and help each other in your class?
- In what ways do you support children whose personality and experience leads them to give up easily?
- How does your marking policy encourage perseverance and tenacity?
- In what ways is the story of the local Church shared with the children so that they can understand the perseverance and dedication of Christians over the ages in your parish?

Children

- When have you heard stories about people who have tried again and again until they have succeeded in what they wanted to do?
- Who do you admire for persevering at something?
- How does your teacher help you with the things you find difficult?
- How can you help others when they are finding things difficult?
- Can failure ever be a good thing?
- Christians often pray that God will help them to keep going in difficult times. Have you ever prayed like this?



COMPASSION

2 Colossians 3.12: *Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

Luke 10.25-37: *(The story of the Good Samaritan)*

Matthew 7.12: *Treat others as you want them to treat you.*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: Can you recall an item of news this week that has aroused your compassion? Why?

- Do staff in your school believe that they are treated compassionately when they face challenges or crises?
- How does the school help children “stand in the shoes of others?”
- How does the school deal with bereavement and grief in the school community?
- In what ways does the school support pupils who are prompted to act on behalf of others?
- How do the church and school pray together for those in need?

Teachers

- How do you create a compassionate ethos in your classroom?
- How do you encourage support for local/international charities? Are the children clear about the reasons for this support and why you have chosen one charity over another?
- How can you support and help pupils who are experiencing emotional trauma?
- How are children helped to enter empathetically into the lives of others through literature, drama, Religious Education etc?
- Does school worship allow children the opportunity to reflect on the love and compassion of God as revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus?

Children

- If you met someone who was really compassionate how would you know?
- If you show someone kindness and care how does that make them feel? How do you think you would feel?
- How could you help someone who was being “left out” of a game or other activity?
- How do your teachers help you to explore and reflect on how others are feeling?
- Do you know which charities the school has been supporting? How do you think the money raised helped?
- Do you know a story that Jesus told about someone who showed compassion? Can you think of a time when Jesus showed compassion to those around him?



TRUST

John 14.1: *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me.*

1 Corinthians 13. 6-7: *Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth, it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: In your own eyes, what makes a person trustworthy?

- How do you model trustworthiness in your role as a governor?
- Is there a high level of trust on the part of parents in the work of teachers and school leaders? Why is this?
- How do the governing body and church work together to develop mutual trust and affirmation?
- How does collective worship encourage pupils to develop relationships of trust and faithfulness, with their peers and with God?

Teachers

- How is an atmosphere of trust between teachers and pupils fostered in the classroom?
- How can teachers and other staff sensitively demonstrate what happens when trust is broken?
- How do pupils learn trust and co-operation as they engage in different curriculum areas?
- Where can you find models of trustworthy people/ practices in the local community and in world affairs?
- How can you help pupils deal with anxieties and worries? What can be done to help a child whose experiences have left them distrustful of others?
- Where do pupils learn about God's faithful care for the world and for individuals?

Children

- What makes a friend trustworthy?
- Why is it important to be able to trust people in your class/ school community?
- How do we learn to trust one another?
- When do you need to have somebody to trust?
- What could you do if a friend betrayed your trust or let you down?
- How can you show that you are trustworthy?
- What do Christians mean when they speak about 'trusting God in all things'?



FRIENDSHIP

John 15.15: 'I no longer call you servants', said Jesus..... 'Instead I have called you friends.'

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: What, in your opinion, are the 3 most important qualities in a good friend and why?

- How do older pupils support and encourage younger pupils in the school?
- How does the school help all visitors/new members to feel welcomed and included?
- How does the school encourage dialogue between families with different ethnic/religious/ socio-economic backgrounds?
- How, as a school, do you deal with the statement "My Dad/Mum says I have to hit him back"?
- How does the school foster friendship and partnership with the church community?

Teachers

- How are children helped to reflect upon the demands of friendship?
- How do you help children in your class who appear to have no friends?
- How do you help children to be faithful to their friends when these friends have made wrong choices?
- How are children helped to recognise and value and gifts and abilities of others?
- How do children in your school learn about friendship with God?

Children

- What are the characteristics of a good friend?
- Who would you go to for help if a friendship has been broken or damaged?
- Do you think it is important to be always loyal to your friends?
- How could you help someone in your class who is feeling lonely?
- How can you encourage your friends when they are going through a difficult time?
- Is it always necessary to agree with all the opinions of someone to stay friends with them?
- Can you think of a time that you disagreed with a friend? What happened?
- Why do some people say that God is their friend?



JUSTICE (and PEACE)

Micah 6. 9: *What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

Matthew 5. 13-14: *'You are the salt of the earth..... You are the light of the world.'*

Matthew 21.12-13: *...my Temple will be called a house of prayer. But you have turned it into a hideout for thieves. (Jesus turning the tables in the temple)*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: In the Bible we often read that justice and peace go hand in hand. How does your school community seek to foster and develop itself as a just and peaceful community?

- How are pupils included in processes to develop policy in your school? (e.g. Behaviour Policy)
- How do you know that the school's system of rewards and sanctions is effective?
- What methods of conflict resolution are used by the school? How successful are they?
- How do you ensure a fair distribution of the schools resources?
- Is the church involved in educating the children about issues of justice for all? (e.g. in Christian Aid Week)

Teachers

- How are pupils helped to understand the relationship between justice and a peaceful and harmonious community?
- How are children encouraged to discuss and resolve issues of perceived injustice in the school?
- How do you ensure that wrongs are righted in the classroom?
- Are pupils clear about the consequences of inappropriate behaviour in the classroom?
- When do children learn about conflicts in the local and wider community that have been peacefully and justly resolved?
- When do children learn about the concept of the Kingdom of God and God's justice for all the earth?
- How does the system of democratic representation in your school enable perceived injustices to be addressed?

Children

- Why do you think that it is particularly important for a Church school to be a just and democratic community?
- How are children encouraged to contribute to the way decisions are made in your school?
- If you have a strong opinion about how your school is run, how can you make sure your opinion is heard?
- What can you do when you feel that you or a friend has been unfairly treated?
- What would a peaceful classroom look like/feel like/sound like?
- How does your teacher ensure that everyone is treated fairly?
- Can you think of someone you admire who has fought for justice for others? Are there any of their qualities that you would want to be true of yourself?
- Why do you think Jesus called himself the 'Light of the World'? (*John 8.12*)



THANKFULNESS

Luke 22.19: *Jesus broke bread and gave thanks.*

1 Chronicles 29.12: *All things come from you and of your own do we give you.*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: What are you most thankful for in your own life? (Not including people)

- How does the school foster an understanding of life as a gift and learning as an opportunity?
- How does the school publically celebrate and gives thanks for:
 - Children’s gifts
 - Acts of kindness
 - New members of the school community
 - Members of the school community who are moving on.
- How do the church and school give thanks and praise together during the year?
- How does the school encourage expressions of gratitude in the school community and a culture of giving thanks, particularly for those things we might take for granted?
- How does the governing body express its thanks to all who work and help in the school?

Teachers

- How are children encouraged to say thank-you to those in the school community and beyond?
- How does collective worship help children to express thanks and praise to God?
- How often are the children given the opportunity to express their appreciation of the good things and people in their life? (e.g. by having a circle time to say “thank-you” once a week)
- In which curriculum areas are children encouraged to reflect on the wonder and beauty of the created world?
- How often and for what reasons do you thank children in the classroom situation?

Children

- Why do you think that some people say that life is a gift?
- Where do you get the opportunity in school to thank God for the gift of creation?
- Do you know any songs that you sing in school that use the words “thank-you”?
- How do you show someone that you are really grateful to them?
- Who do you think is thankful for you?
- Have you ever felt unappreciated? Why was this?



RESPECT

Mark 10.14: *Let the children come to me (Mark 10. 14)*

Matthew 10.29: *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: Who has earned your respect and how?

- How can you help children to understand why people sometimes say respect needs to be earned?
- How are children with physical or learning difficulties made to feel welcomed and included in all aspects of school life?
- What sanctions are in place for those who show disrespect for people of a different culture, faith, colour, gender or sexual orientation to themselves?
- How are children taught to address and treat adults and other children respectfully?
- How are children taught to discriminate between people's actions that deserve respect and those that might not?

Teachers

- How do you help children to develop empathy towards the feelings of others?
- How do you help children to consider the advantages of difference?
- Where in the life of the school are children taught to respect their own bodies and those of others?
- Where do children learn about reverence and respect for Creation?
- How do you help children to show reverence and respect for their school environment and for other people's property?

Children

- Who do you respect and why?
- How can you show respect for someone with whom you disagree?
- How can you show respect for your teachers?
- Which role models do you admire and why?
- Can you think of some stories about Jesus that demonstrate his respect for the people he met?



FORGIVENESS

1 John 1.9: *But if we confess our sins to God, he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away.*

Mark 11.25: *If you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you.*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: 'Forgive and forget' – how helpful or wise is this saying?

- Forgiveness and reconciliation are ideas central to Christianity. How are children made aware of this in the school? What evidence have you seen of forgiveness and the opportunity for reconciliation?
- How is forgiveness made central to the school's Behaviour Policy?
- How does the school encourage children to see forgiveness as an act of courage and strength rather than as a sign of weakness?
- What policies and practices allow children to face the consequences of their actions and allow them to acknowledge their wrongdoing?
- Are there occasions in which the exclusion of a child can be compatible with the Christian understanding of reconciliation?

Teachers

- How do you model and practise forgiveness in the classroom and how do you help pupils to understand the difficulties and complexities associated with forgiving?
- How do you help children to recognise that we all make mistakes, and need forgiveness and the opportunity for a fresh start?
- Where does the RE curriculum provide for learning about Jesus' teaching on forgiveness and the Christian understanding of God's love and forgiveness for all?
- Where in the curriculum do pupils learn about the need for forgiveness by representative leaders and communities before reconciliation can take place? (e.g. Israel /Palestine, Ireland, Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa)
- Is there opportunity in worship for pupils to say sorry, acknowledging to themselves and before God those things for which they are sorry? (e.g. Ash Wednesday)

Children

- How does it feel when you know you have been forgiven and can start again?
- In the Bible we learn about the story of Zacchaeus. What helped Zacchaeus to be and feel better and make a new life?
- Saying sorry to someone who you have upset is the first part of making things right. What else might you need to do?
- Why is it important to forgive someone, even if they do not ask for forgiveness?
- Does your teacher talk to you about how those who are unkind to others might be helped to change their behaviour?
- How could you help someone who needs to say sorry?



SERVICE

Matthew 20.26: *The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.*

John 13.12-15: *After Jesus had washed his disciples' feet ... he said: "Do you understand what I have done? And if your Lord and teacher has washed your feet, you should do the same for each other."*

Senior School Leaders and Governors

Discussion Starter: When have you personally experienced service (love in action) in your school?

- How do leaders in the school demonstrate the Christian understanding of service to the children?
- Do you consider your role as a Governor to be an act of service?
- How are children in the school encouraged to serve others in the communities of which they are a part and in the wider world?
- How do the Church and school serve each other in your parish?
- How far do the Parish Church and your Church school share the same vision for serving the families in the community?
- How high a profile does the local Parish church give the role of school governors? Is it seen as an important Christian ministry alongside the role of Churchwarden etc?

Teachers

- How are children offered opportunities to use their particular gifts and talents in serving the common good?
- How are children encouraged to acknowledge the service and help offered to them in the school?
- How are pupils helped to understand the concept that "in giving we receive"?
- How do you highlight and celebrate the work of volunteers in your community?
- How does collective worship help children to learn about people who have served or are serving God in their workplace or in another sphere of their lives?
- How are acts of service celebrated in collective worship?

Children

- What could you do to be of service to someone today?
- How do people serve you at school?
- How does a leader serve his /her people?
- What Bible stories do you know that show us that Jesus came to serve others?
- Have you learnt in school about individuals who have selflessly served others, both in the past and in the present day?