



LUTHERAN EDUCATION QUEENSLAND

Lutheran Education Queensland Model Policy



Worship

A thick, dark purple swoosh graphic starts at the bottom left, curves upwards and to the right, and then levels off towards the right side of the page.

Insert School / College Logo

Policy Name	Worship
Approval Authority	
Approval Date	
Approval Signature	
Responsibility	Principal
Point of Contact	All Staff; School Pastor/Chaplain
Audience	All Staff
Next Review	November 2015
Policy Source	BLEA policy: Statement on School Worship, 2002

Lutheran schools aim to encourage and support students, informed and sustained by the word of God, to develop their God-given talents so that they may shape and enrich their world. As central to their mission and ministry, Lutheran Schools seek to nurture individuals who are aware of their humanity, open to the influence of the Holy Spirit and growing in and living according to a cohesive world view. (LEA, 2005, Coverpage).

[Insert name of School / College] seeks to bring this vision of learners and learning to life. Opportunities to observe, experience and invitationally participate in Christian worship are a foundational aspect of the spiritual life of a Lutheran School.

[Insert name of School / College] is implementing this policy to ensure that the worship program and practices of the school are undertaken in accordance with principles outlined by Lutheran Education Australia and the Lutheran Church of Australia, and in support of the ethos of Lutheran schools. This policy also ensures that students and staff are aware of their right to be treated with equity and fairness, and without discrimination.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students.

Responsibility

The Principal

Point of Contact

The Principal / School Pastor / Chaplain

Background

Definition: What is Christian Worship?

The BLEA (2002) Statement on School Worship states:

Worship begins with the presence and acts of the Triune God. It goes from heaven to earth, from God to human beings. This is clearly seen in the way in which God conveys love, grace and mercy to human beings through readings from the Bible, forgiveness of sins, proclamation of the gospel, the enactment of Baptism, the celebration of Holy Communion [where appropriate], and the performance of blessing.

*Worship can be understood to have a strongly **sacramental** thrust which consists in God's action towards us. Human beings respond to God's presence and activity in praise and thanksgiving.*

Thus the dynamic of Christian worship is God's action, human response. "Worship in the Lutheran Church affirms this flow of God's action (the so-called sacramental element) followed by our response (the so-called sacrificial element) of worship" (BLEA, 2002, p.1). This can be displayed in the form of a diagram.

The Dynamic of Christian Worship

God's Action

God calls to worship
He forgives
He speaks [Readings]
He Listens

God gives his gifts to us
He gives himself to us in the Lord's Supper
He blesses us
He sends us into the world

Human Action
We respond
We confess
We listen
We pray

We bring our gifts in an offering
We give ourselves in loving service
We praise him
We go out [and serve the Lord]

(BLEA, 2002, p.1)

The School as a Context for Worship

The context in which schools meet for worship (class, year, school), differs in some significant respects from worship in a congregational context (for example, there is no presupposition of a participant's faith, baptism nor involvement in congregational life). This important distinction means that certain elements are appropriate for school worship and others are not.

Therefore, since school worship at **[insert name of School / College]** is compulsory for all, care must be taken so as not to put people in situations where a conflict of conscience arises (for example, where a person (adult or student) is expected to make a confession or response which does not reflect their faith). The language used by worship leaders, and by staff when talking about school worship needs to be invitational in nature and not presume an active Christian faith of all participants.

Appropriate Elements for School Worship include

- Bible Reading
- Telling Bible Stories
- Relevant Gospel messages based on the biblical narrative
- Prayers of request and thanks – for students, school and the world
- Blessing
- Singing – in a context of optional involvement
- Appropriate ritual acts (eg. Candles, signing of the cross for blessing, etc.)
- Group silence for meditation and contemplation

Adapted from BLEA, 2002, p.2

Additional practical considerations at **[insert name of School / College]**

- The Principal is the spiritual leader of the college

- When worship is compulsory at **[insert name of School / College]**, care must be taken to ensure that no one is asked to act against their conscience – God's loving action should be emphasised rather than a demand for faith responses
- Worship should be accessible to students in language and style
- A variety of different worship styles should be offered
- *The difference between teaching and worship must be understood by leaders of worship*

(adapted from BLEA, 2002, p.3, 4)

Other **[insert name of School / College]**-specific worship activities will include Devotion and Prayer times.

POLICY

At **[insert name of School / College]**:

The expectations of staff and students include:

- Attendance at whole school and staff chapels / worship
- Participation in staff retreats as specified by the Principal
- Leadership and / or facilitation of staff devotion according to roster
- Leadership and / or facilitation of a daily devotion with students

PROCEDURES

[Adapt the following to reflect your school procedures, and possibly include images, hyperlinks to school documents, resource lists etc., that support staff and the worship program.]

Procedures to support the implementation of **[insert name of School / College] worship policy include:**

Chapel

- Class teachers are to discuss the planning and leadership of Chapel with the pastor/chaplain prior to the Chapel program being planned.
- The Pastor or designated worship leader has responsibility for overseeing Chapel.
- There is to be a presence from an adult in leading Chapel services, this can be the class teacher, the Pastor, the Head or Deputy of the school. The Chapel needs to give a biblical message which may progress through a bible passage or theme or relate to the Christian calendar.

Devotion Guidelines

Devotion will occur every day for **[indicate duration]** at the beginning of the day. Teachers should create a simple sacred space (or adapt an existing gathering space) in the classroom for classroom devotions, including at a minimum, a cross. The suggested order for devotion includes:

- Light candle/s, lights off
- Songs (2/3)
- Message with a spiritual focus including a Bible reading / story
- Prayer – as a class or teacher led

The church calendar can be used as a devotion theme e.g. Epiphany, Pentecost, Ascension, Lent, Thanksgiving. Other ideas include devotions supporting the current Christian Studies unit, or based on a book of the Bible or theme topic (eg. Servanthood, the fruit of the Spirit, God's gifts). Staff requiring assistance or mentoring regarding devotions can ask the Pastor, leading Christian Studies Teachers, Head and Deputy of the school.

Prayer time

Prayer time will be part of Chapel, class devotion time and staff devotion time and may occur as a separate activity. Prayer time may include prayer for **[insert name of School / College]**'s students and families, particularly in times of crisis, prayers for others in our community and world who are experiencing pain and suffering and the Lord's Prayer.

At all times worship practices at **[insert name of School / College]** will align with the Christian ethos and values as outlined in *A Vision for Learners and Learning* (LEA, 2005) and with the rites of the Lutheran Church of Australia.

References

Lutheran Education Australia (2005) A vision for learners and learning in Lutheran schools, Adelaide.

Board for Lutheran Education Australia (2002) Statement on school worship, Adopted by LCA General Church Council, April 2002