

Conversation Starters

Finding the Vows...

What opportunities does the school timetable provide to share and celebrate excitement? What 'wow' opportunities are there to discover at playtime?

Helping with the Ows...

Are there adults with time and capacity to listen to a child who has experienced hurt? How can reconciliation become a natural part of the school's language of spirituality?

Noticing the Nows...

How can stillness and reflection be developed and celebrated at different times in the day? Is there a culture of being comfortable with silence or space simply just to reflect and be? How does the school use prayer spaces or multisensory activities to encourage and value this?

Further Resources & Support Available

- Training for adults or children and further information is available from Debbie Helme dhelme@glosdioc.org.uk
- A resource exploring these ideas in collective worship is now available: *Explore... The Language of Spirituality in Collective Worship*, available for £15 from jfish@glosdioc.org.uk
- Model Policy for Spirituality — <https://bit.ly/3dRPJmS>

Simple Prayer Spaces Ideas

WOWS — Make some fingerprints. Look carefully at them and remember they are completely unique to you. Have you ever spent time studying the squirls and patterns? Have you ever stopped to really consider how unique you are? Psalm 139 says you are wonderfully and fearfully made. What do you think this means?



OWS — Draw or write on a plaster things that have hurt or are still hurting. Is there anything you can do to bring healing? You may wish to pray for help with this.

NOWS — Find a quiet, comfortable spot and enjoy taking time to watch the movement in a 'calm jar'. (There are many instructions for making calm jars available on the internet).

OUR LANGUAGE OF SPIRITUALITY

Debbie Helme (Strategic Lead for
RE & School Christian Character)
Rev'd Joanne Wetherall
(Growing Faith & Spirituality Officer)



Making it Simple

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. There is a general consensus that spirituality is linked to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life; it includes ideas around relating to oneself, others, the natural world and the transcendent; it is not dependant on religious belief or affiliation.

Drawing on many of the different definitions and approaches about spirituality on offer to church schools, we wanted to find a simple language of spirituality that would be accessible to all, even the very youngest children in a Church of England primary school as well as students and young people.

This leaflet aims to explain our language of spirituality.

The 'Wows', 'Ows' and 'Nows'

This language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8). Yet in life things happen that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible. Christians would view this as an opportunity to relate to the Divine Creator God.



Cracks may be caused when something so good and breathtaking happens that the pot expands and cracks – the **wows** of life.

Cracks may happen when something challenging happens and threatens the comfort of everyday – the **ows** of life.



Cracks can also happen in the stillness and ordinariness of everyday – the **nows** of life. A moment of stillness, a pause or prayer can create a crack in the normal, physical everyday.

The Golden Glue

In these special moments there is a spiritual opportunity.

Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with golden joinery or glue, creates something that has been broken into something differently beautiful and even more valuable. Using this metaphor, the **wows**, **ows** and **nows** of life offer the possibility of becoming cracks that are filled with gold, adding significance and value to life. In all these moments, there is an opportunity to invite God to be involved in making sense of these experiences.

In a church school context, this should always be offered as an invitation. This approach to spirituality with the concept of **wows**, **ows** and **nows** and their links to exploring relationships with ourselves, others, the wider, natural world and beyond, should be relevant and include every member of the school community, from any faith or world view.

