



Approved:	June 2012
Next Review:	June 2014
Audience:	All Staff

## POLICY NAME: Worship

### Definitions

#### Taken from the Lutheran Church of Australia's Statement on School Worship.

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, 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. This dynamic of the presence and action of God prompting human response is brought into focus in by Paul's teaching in Romans 12:1, *I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God [God's presence and activity], to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship [human response]*. NRSV It is important to note that the human response of worship is not a result of a person's superior spirituality or stronger moral fibre. Human response is itself empowered by a gracious God.<sup>3</sup> Thus the dynamic of Christian worship is God's action, human response. The common order of 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<sup>4</sup>. The following table is useful to see this dynamic of God's action and our response at work. It demonstrates how each action of God (his sacramental activity) has a corresponding human action (our sacrificial activity).<sup>5</sup>

#### The School as a Context for Worship

There have been many attempts to draw parallels between worship as practised in the congregations of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), and worship as practised in the Lutheran School. While these efforts have been intended to affirm the validity of worship in a school context, it must be acknowledged that there are some very real differences between **school worship** and **congregational worship**.

#### School Worship In Relation To Congregational Worship

At Peace we respect the diverse range of Faith and beliefs our community holds. In response to this our worship services consist of the following elements:

- No presupposition of a participant's faith
- No presupposition of baptism
- No presupposition of involvement in congregational worship practices
- No presupposition of biblical literacy
- Compulsory attendance as opposed to Voluntary attendance.

Worship at Peace refers to compulsory weekly worship in the church, with the whole school or part of the school, voluntary Sunday worship, an annual Sunday worship stage service and end of year graduation service.

## Weekly worship for students

Students at Peace Lutheran Primary School participate in worship each week for approximately half an hour.

Worship services include:

- Short child friendly order of Service
- Bible reading
- Telling Bible stories
- Relevant Gospel message based on the biblical narrative
- Prayers of request and thanks - for students, school and the world
- The Lord's Prayer
- Blessing
- Singing - in a context for optional involvement
- Group silence for meditation and contemplation
- Appropriate ritual acts (eg candles, signing of the cross for blessing etc)

Students participate on a rotational basis and provide songs, prayers, plays, etc to share their faith journey and learning experiences from Christian Studies with the school community. Classes are also given the opportunity annually to share with the wider congregation during Sunday worship. This service is not compulsory however students are strongly encouraged to participate. All students are encouraged to participate in the end of year Graduation Service.

Peace Lutheran School has a student worship committee made up of elected worship captains and helpers. This committee is lead by a Teacher/Teacher Aide and help to set up the church ready for worship, take up the collections, do the readings and prepare the power point.

## Opportunities for worship for Staff

Staff members worship together as a group in annual opening and closing staff services . They participate in annual congregational worship with their students and the annual Graduation Service. They are encouraged to participate in weekly Sunday worship within their own congregations or settings.

Although not formal worship, staff at Peace Lutheran Primary School is given the opportunity to celebrate and develop their faith in the daily morning meetings which consist of the following elements of worship:

- devotion stories,
- bible verses and reflection on the word
- prayer times
- Songs of worship and praise

Each member of staff leads the morning devotion on a rotational roster and is able to share their faith with other staff.

## Related Policies and Documents