

# Our Christian Values

The School has identified three Christian values, which are central to our ethos: love, hope and perseverance.

If you wish to find out more, please visit <http://www.christianvalues4schools.co.uk/>

## Love

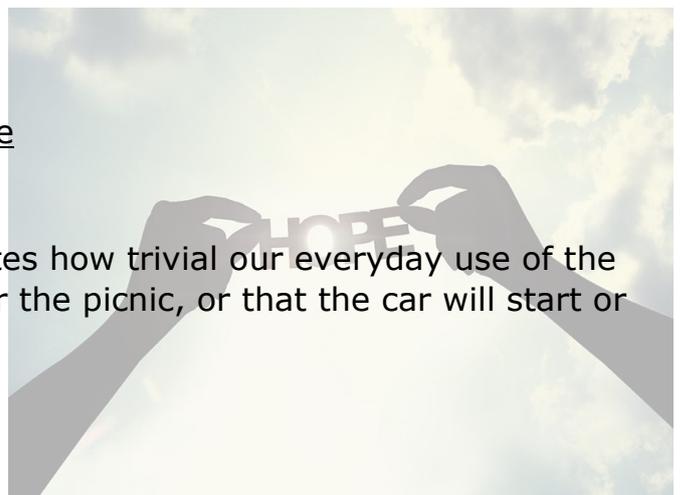
'Love' and 'sympathy' have much in common and both are stronger in meaning than simply 'feeling sorry for' someone. The words have their roots in the idea of 'suffering with' someone, putting yourself in someone else's shoes. This leads to a desire to act, to do something. It is not patronizing. It is not about 'doing good' from a position of strength or 'remembering those less fortunate than ourselves'.

Love requires an act of imagination and humility to share in the lives of others. The father in the parable of the Prodigal Son is not just forgiving. He is described as being filled with love. 'The father seems to understand everything that his son is feeling and responds by everything that his son is feeling and responds by giving him everything he needs: a whole-hearted welcome, acceptance and love. Christians have always had to wrestle with the problem of how a loving God could allow there to be evil and suffering in this world. There is no simple answer to this. God fully identified with human suffering in the life of Jesus.

In school we learn love through supporting each other in times of challenge. This may be the form of collecting for charity (usually organised by our Young Friends) or completing selfless acts of kindness. We carry out these acts to truly help someone and not because it makes us feel good. Our prayers in class or assembly are often for others—we offer compassion and sympathy to someone else through our hearts. We use role play for pupils to begin to learn how it feels to be someone else. Sometimes we put ourselves in another's shoes through hot seating. A character from fiction or history is asked questions and must answer in role.

## Hope

The Christian understanding of hope illustrates how trivial our everyday use of the word can be. We hope that it will not rain for the picnic, or that the car will start or that the plumber will come tomorrow.



Christian hope is grounded in the character of God. Often, in the Psalms, the writer says to God: 'My hope is in you'. It is a hope rooted in the love and faithfulness of God. Hope is not wishful thinking but a firm assurance that God can be relied upon. It does not remove the need for 'waiting upon the Lord' but there is underlying confidence that God is a 'strong rock' and one whose promises can be trusted.

Hope is not always spontaneous or easy. There is work to be done. As well as trusting God, we have to develop qualities of steadfastness in our own character. Hope is coupled with faith and love as one of the three most enduring gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 13:13).

### Perseverance

Although the word refers to humans standing firm in the face of hardship, persecution or scorn, it is important to note there is constant assurance in the Bible that God's love, mercy, faithfulness and righteousness endure forever. Emphasis upon perseverance is common in the New Testament where it is linked with patience and suffering. At its root, perseverance is recognition that life is sometimes difficult and painful, and that it is important not to give up in the face of adversity. Jesus endured rejection and abuse. Discipleship is depicted as 'taking up the cross daily' and following in Jesus' footsteps.

Perseverance is only possible where there is hope and that hope is based on the enduring nature of God's love and faithfulness. Even Jesus, for all his strength and ability to endure, looked to his disciples to help and sustain him by watching and praying with him.

In school we teach the idea of patience and that there are many things in life that are worth waiting for (like Christmas and birthdays!). We teach and learn about compassion for others facing difficult times and adults in our school support each other in times of challenge. Through Collective Worship we learn about amazing people such as Mary Jones who endured hardship and showed great endurance so that she could buy herself a bible. We learn that God will help us in times of hardship; however he may not be able to solve our troubles as we cannot always see the 'big picture'. In our Personal Social Health Education curriculum pupils have opportunities to role play and talk about difficult situations and learn to develop courage and resilience.

