

## The Importance of Teaching Values

'Schools and school staff are a major influence on the developing values of children. This is an inevitable process...values are principles or convictions that act as a guide for behaviour.' (Values for Life, Jumping Fish).

At Great Easton we have based our values in the wisdom and understanding of the Christian faith and particularly the gospel values founded in the reality of life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The twelve values are: courage, trust, creativity, justice, forgiveness, peace, humility, truth, thankfulness, compassion, hope and friendship. We think about how these values relate to today's society and how they can help us to live a better life.

We 'transmit' values in a variety of ways:

- Through the management, vision and aims of the school which is reflected in our ethos. This ensures our school is a safe and caring place where children can share, think about and experience ethical enquiry and cultivate habits required for good moral conduct. All relationships within our school offer a model of values in action.
- Through staff's example and their use of moral language, which will help pupils internalise ideas of what is acceptable and not acceptable in the living, working community of a church school.
- When a love of and respect for classroom values is inculcated so that children learn to resist the temptation to bully or to take more than their fair share at school in order that they can come later to appreciate the global consequences of greed and exploitation.
- Through collective worship which is an excellent opportunity to explore Christian values together. A theme is used for a whole half term and introduced on a Monday to allow it to be explored for the rest of the week.
- Through curriculum subjects and learning that helps children to understand the equal importance of other people and helps individual pupils in the search for meaning and purpose in life.
- Through teaching methods that convey respect for people, respect for truth, acceptance of responsibility for actions and a concern for justice and fairness.

## A Christian Perspective on Each Value

*Definitions from Values for Life written by Shahne Vickery, Catherine Coster and Verity Holloway.*

### **Courage**

Basic to Christian faith is the claim that God is always present in every situation. This belief has led to great acts of courage that have included facing danger and opposition, overcoming fear, making a stand for what is right and encouraging others to persevere. Through prayer people have found the strength to help them be courageous.

### **Creation and Creativity**

Seen from a Christian perspective all of life is a 'gift', entrusted by a loving creator God to humankind for a purpose. This purpose is glimpsed as the creative spirit within each person learns to value and explore, celebrate and enjoy this world in all its mystery and diversity. With this gift comes a mutual responsibility to ensure that creation is not spoiled, but rather sustained and shared by all.

### **Peace**

Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9). Peace-making actions can range from helping to resolve conflict to creating space for stillness. Peace, in the sense of total well-being, is God's intention for the whole of creation, and is a promise that awaits ultimate fulfilment.

### **Trust**

Trust is the basis of all stable relationships, including a person's relationships with God. It is rooted in truth, and will grow through consistent experiences of reliability and integrity. God's commitment to humanity is seen in his willingness to trust ordinary people with the carrying out of his purposes through history.

### **Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is the means by which damaged relationships are restored. It is an act of the will, motivated by love. For Christians, Jesus' death on the cross is the ultimate revelation of God's all forgiving love, and his sacrifice stands as a source of inspiration to forgive others, no matter what the cost.

**Justice**

The justice revealed in the bible is always seen in the context of love. It includes the call to take responsibility for one another, especially the poor and oppressed, and to see that no-one is excluded from the essentials of life.

**Thankfulness**

Christians believe that God loves and cares for them in many different ways in all aspects of their life. They know that their response to this provision should be one of thankfulness and praise.

**Friendship**

Christians believe they can call God their friend because of the relationship made possible through Jesus.

**Hope**

Christians see their hope in God's promise "that love and goodness have, and will ultimately, overcome all evil". This hope is manifested in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Compassion**

Christians believe that their attitudes and actions must reflect the kindness, mercy and compassion of Jesus and the love of God for everyone.

**Truthfulness**

Christians believe that truth is revealed in the Bible and supremely in the person and life of Jesus Christ. Through Jesus' teaching we are given an insight into the nature of God and the way in which He means us to live.

**Humility**

Christians believe that Jesus was both servant and king. He demonstrated this through His life, death and resurrection. Jesus taught his disciples what it means to be truly humble. Christians believe that they can serve God by demonstrating humility through their attitudes and actions. This approach to life runs contrary to many role models presented to children in the media and popular culture.

**Generosity**

God's generosity is best described as 'grace', love given freely without limit or conditions. This generosity, once experienced and acknowledged by an individual, can in turn release a generous spirit towards others.

**Wisdom**

Christians believe that true wisdom comes from God. As a believer grows in faith so wisdom will increase. In the Bible wisdom is seen as both a gift *from* God and a characteristic *of* God. In his parables Jesus taught us placing trust in God and recognising what is of value in life brings fulfilment.

**Perseverance**

Jesus frequently encouraged his disciples to 'endure patiently' the difficulties and obstacles they encountered and to persevere in the face of adversity. He himself trusted in God even when his enemies tried to stop his work and plotted his death.

**Service**

Jesus exemplified in his person, ministry and relationship with God, what it was to be called the "servant king". Christians believe their calling is to follow Jesus' example according to their gifts or abilities. They believe that through serving God in others, "perfect freedom" will ultimately be found.

**Responsibility**

The Bible teaches that life is a gift from God and it is our responsibility to use our talents and abilities in the best way we can.