

Christian Values – These are the 7 Christian values that we have chosen to be implicit and explicit in our school ethos. In no particular order.

Service The parable of the Good Samaritan shows we should serve those in need whoever they are. Such service is not offered to gain some advantage for ourselves. 'Going the extra mile' involves sacrifice, putting ourselves out for someone else's benefit. Serving God means serving others. It also means that we cannot serve other masters as well - such as money. However, the Christian message is equally clear that service is not all about restrictions. It is precisely in a life of service that we become most truly free.

Compassion The word has its roots in the idea of 'suffering with' someone, putting yourself in someone else's shoes and experiencing what they experience. 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'. Compassion requires an act of imagination and humility to share in the lives of others.

Creation Belief in God as creator is not merely a belief about how everything began; it is the perspective from which we are to view all life including our own. It means that we place the highest value on this earth and see life as God's gift. In Genesis, God gives humans certain rights over his creation. With these rights, come responsibilities. We are stewards. We have been given the earth to look after by God and to hold it in trust for future generations.

Endurance Although the word refers to humans standing firm in the face of hardship, persecution or scorn, it is important to note the constant assurance in the Bible that God's love, mercy, faithfulness and righteousness endure forever. Emphasis upon endurance is common in the New Testament where it is linked with patience and suffering. It is linked with self-control, godliness and steadfastness. At its root, endurance is recognition that life is sometimes difficult and painful, and that it is important not to give up in the face of adversity. Endurance and perseverance are only possible where there is hope and that hope is based on the enduring nature of God's love and faithfulness.

Friendship Friendship is an undisputed value in our society, with children often spending more time with their friends than with family. It is a key concept in the Christian framework, Jesus tells stories of the heavenly banquet to which all are invited. The barriers between people are broken down in a loving community around God and Jesus had stern words to say to those who refused to recognise that all are included in this community of friendship. Trust, feeling comfortable in each other's company, being able to share joys and sorrows are all features of friendship and these are things of immense value. True friendship enables each person to grow and ensures that the unique individuality of each person is recognised. All this echoes the value placed by God on the preciousness of each person.

Justice When thinking about 'justice', some people think first about giving wrongdoers the punishment they deserve. Justice also means giving all people - particularly the poor and oppressed - what it is right and fair for them to have: life, health, freedom and dignity. It is about acting out of a concern for what is right and seeing right prevail. It is about social justice, especially for those who suffer most and are least able to protect themselves. Justice is not about a culture which encourages everyone to insist on their own rights at the expense of others. It is about a community that knows that everyone's well-being is bound up with that of everyone else. A commitment to justice leads to fierce opposition to injustice in whatever form it may be found. Justice is a pre-requisite of peace: without justice there can be no peace.

Wisdom Wisdom is insight into the way life works: a proper understanding of the consequences of our thoughts, words and actions and an awareness of the true value of things. It is rooted in proper reverence for God who is the source of all life and all values. Although related to education and knowledge, wisdom differs from cleverness. Wisdom may be best described as discernment gained through life experience and distilled into guiding principles. The opposite of wisdom is foolishness, which is a wrong understanding of life, putting our trust or faith in the wrong things. It's about missing the point; it's about being a fool. The wise person recognizes their own limitations, trusts in God and understands that there is more to like than may be seen on the surface.