

Diocese of Leeds



Collective Worship

Policy for St. Mary's Catholic
Primary School

Policy for Collective Worship

Mission Statement

Loving, Laughing and Learning in the Light of the Lord

The mission of our school is to grow as a community through our faith in God, giving love and respect to all.

Our School Aims

- To create a caring atmosphere built upon mutual love and respect for others and rooted in true Gospel values.
- To teach the catholic faith and experiences of the Church's liturgy.
- To cherish each child by seeking to provide an appropriate education which meets the individual needs and supports everyone to achieve their full potential.
- To develop in each child a sense of his/her own worth and the unique contribution they can make to their family, school and community.
- To actively promote a partnership between home, school and parish that leads by example.
- To provide a broad, balanced curriculum available to all.
- To provide a secure environment in which all members of our community are encouraged to try their best motivated by tolerance and self-discipline and guided by love.

Introduction

We seek to ensure that prayer and worship has a central place in the life of our school. It is the responsibility of each member of staff to provide quality opportunities for worship so that all our children can participate effectively.

The Nature of Collective Worship

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.¹

Rationale

- St. Mary's is a Catholic community of faith with the main task of providing our children with appreciation of the religious and spiritual dimensions of life. In our catholic school we want religious collective worship to:

¹ It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'Collective Worship' in schools. 'Collective Worship' is a term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we use readily in a Catholic context. 'Prayer' and 'Liturgy' are terms more commonly used in our context and are explored in greater depth in the guidelines.

- Contribute to the children’s spiritual development and realisation of God’s place in their lives
- Enable the children to be aware that prayer is appropriate at any time as part of our everyday lives
- Allow our children to develop a language of prayer, so that they experience in a meaningful way, the rich tradition of well-known prayers, which they will adapt with increasing familiarity alongside their own prayers and words
- Awaken a social awareness, within themselves and as part of a community

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils.² (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups.) We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that collective worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, “on a special occasion”.

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

² Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Collective Worship. However, given the importance of Collective Worship in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents need to be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to ‘timetabled slots’ but may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

The Aims of Collective Worship

We believe that Collective Worship in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.³ In order to do this, celebrations will:
 - be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
 - be short and appropriately paced (children's attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life *i.e.*, 5-6 mins. *For Key Stage 1 and 7-10 mins. For Key Stage 2*)
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Collective worship at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School follows a weekly pattern consisting of either school, class, key stage or group worship. Liturgy for school celebrations or feast days will replace these planned worships at times during the year e.g. liturgy to Mary in May, Ash Wednesday etc.

The week begins with whole school worship where the focus is one of the virtues to live by. The same virtue will remain the central focus for up to four weeks and the message will be taken back to individual classes for reflection during class worship.

For all worship pupil involvement will increase as the child progresses up the school. Within class and key stage worship St. Mary's follows a staged progression to ensure pupils gain confidence in leading and contributing to worship in an age appropriate way. The identified benchmarks are as follows:

³ Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Rec, Year 1 and Year 2 – pupils choose from a selection of items to contribute to collective worship preparation.

Year 3 and 4 – Pupils are supported in selecting prayers, readings and focal points for collective worship.

Year 5 and 6 – pupils plan and lead collective worship.

Involvement in school worship will vary according to the purpose and celebration but all classes will be involved at some stage during the year.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, "Virtues to live by", significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

The Content of Collective Worship

The content of our collective worship is derived from the following objectives:

- To emphasise the love of God while presenting children with the beliefs of the Catholic faith in the manner suitable to their ages
- To reinforce prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition and to help pupils grow in Liturgical understanding
- To share experiences of living in and responding to God's wonderful world responding to and celebrating life
- To celebrate the values and worth of the school community, developing a sense of belonging and community spirit
- To learn about the insights and experiences of members of our local parish and wider communities
- To reinforce positive attitudes, learning to develop a common ethos and shared values
- To foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and develop feelings of reverence and humility
- To encourage sensitivity to questions and answers which prompt reflection, meditation and enquiry to what lies beyond the visible
- To develop the emotional responses of the children
- To enable the children to explore their faith, values and experiences in relation to others

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

Resources

Central resources for use by staff are stored in the staffroom and the central resource area of the school. These include books, posters, artefacts etc.

Each class has a worship box containing pupil resources for use when planning and leading worship.

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

Pupils are given opportunities for voluntary worship through parish celebrations e.g. family Mass, stations of the cross and prayer stations within school.

Staff are given opportunities for voluntary worship through RE focused training days and participation in the pupil centred opportunities.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for children to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to "***The Welcome Table. Planning Masses with Children***" which contains the complete text of the Church's '***Directory for Masses with Children***' as a basis for our practice.

We believe that children are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

In school, therefore, the '**Liturgy of the Word**', rather than the Eucharist will be the norm.

At **Key Stage 1** worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory rites in the Mass and/or The Liturgy of the Word

At **Key Stage 2** worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites in the mass or The Liturgy of the Word; or the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite.

The Co-ordinator for Collective Worship

The co-ordinator for collective worship at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is Michelle Mabley.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship which may at times form part of the school development plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that Collective Worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Collective Worship
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Collective Worship
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Collective Worship
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

Professional development / Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Collective Worship including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently

Appendix 2

Diocesan Statement on Collective Worship

It is the responsibility of every catholic school to provide for all its members a vital experience of liturgy, worship and prayer which:

- names and celebrates God present and active in authentic human experience
- is educative
- is within our Catholic tradition

The purpose of these experiences is:

- to give honour and praise to God
- to develop the school as a community of faith
- to assist pupils in developing their relationship with God, creation and the community of the Church
- to witness to the community and the wider world

Collective worship in our schools will be:

- properly planned
- adequately resourced
- recorded
- monitored
- evaluated

in order to ensure that the collective worship experienced within the school is a relevant, meaningful and positive contribution to the religious, spiritual and moral development of all members of the community.

Policy adopted:

Review date: