

Collective Worship Policy

Mission Statement

Mission Statement:

"It is the mission of this Catholic School to enable our children to become aware of the world that God has given them and to recognise their vocation and responsibilities within it."

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



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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Assemblies:

Whole School Assemblies are held each Monday and Friday and are led by the Head Teacher.

Key Stage Assemblies/Hymn Practices are held each Tuesday, if Mass is not being celebrated and are led by staff, on a rota system.

Each class presents a Class Assembly at least once a year to which Parents are invited.

Collective Worship is outlined in our termly Celebrations timetable.

School Masses:

Whole School, Key Stage and Class Masses are celebrated in School every two or three weeks, Fr. John's commitments allowing, and on each occasion the Mass is the Parish Mass of the day. Parishioners regularly join us, as do many of our Parents.

On specific occasions throughout the year the School participates in various liturgies and Mass in the Parish Church.

Reflections:

Class reflections take place on the days where there is no Mass or assembly and they provide an opportunity for the children and the teacher to reflect on a specific theme. Children are encouraged to plan and lead some of these reflections as appropriate to their age using the Class Collective Worship Planner.

Other Liturgies:

Various Services are held relating to specific seasons in the liturgical year including Penitential Services held during Lent and Advent. These liturgies are school-led or led by visitors to our school.

³ Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Voluntary Lenten Prayer sessions are held each morning before school begins and the older children help to lead these sessions.

Staff have opportunities to pray together at Mass, on INSET days and at other key liturgical times.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, The Way The Truth and The Life, 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.

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 often stored on the staff share area

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

Each class has resources relevant to their RE Units.

Each class has a Collective Worship box

All resources for Mass and Assemblies are kept in the hall cupboard.

There are also resources in one of the bays in the KS2 corridor.

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

Prayer Trails

Lenten Worship before school

Y3 Retreat Day

Y4 and Y5 Retreat day at St Nicholas Catholic High School

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 and the wealth of resources from the Diocese and on the school's Staff Share.

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.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the whole staff and the governors every two years The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

May 2016

To be reviewed May 2017

Responsible person: Lisa Holland