



St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

School Mission Statement:

"Learning and Growing Together in the Light of God's Love"

At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School...

We cherish the uniqueness of all individuals.

We aim to create a learning climate which promotes the development of the whole child and engenders a love for learning and excellence, so that within the framework of a broad and balanced curriculum, all may realise their potential.

We proclaim the Gospel values in the ways in which we love ourselves and others.

Worship, prayer and our relationship with God are at the heart of school life.

We embrace our role in the wider community and seek to bear witness to our Catholic Faith in all that we do.

Date of Policy:	September 2023		
Policy Category:	Curriculum	Review Cycle:	Biennial
Next Review Date:	September 2025		

Policy Formation:

The policy complies with guidance from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and is based on materials developed by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle's Education Service.

The policy is reviewed and evaluated every two years or as required by staff and governors. The RE Subject Leader and Headteacher are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the policy.

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.

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.'¹

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. (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. However, our wider curriculum affords children the opportunity to develop their relationship with the world around them; it enables children to experience a wide range of people, to appreciate the world that God has created, and to understand their role as stewards. Therefore, where appropriate, we may draw upon links to our wider curriculum within acts of worship.

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

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 will 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 Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

Worship at St. Joseph's is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

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.

The Aims of Collective Worship

Collective Worship in our school aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- to contemplate something of the mystery of God

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- to explore personal beliefs
- to respond to and to celebrate life
- to experience a sense of belonging
- to develop a common ethos and shared values
- to develop the skills of reverence, contemplation and reflection
- to enrich religious experience
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development
- to pray using 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.'
- to develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ and God our Creator.

Principles

All acts of worship in this school will:

- give glory and honour to God;
- be a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead worship;
- give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.²

Celebrations will:

- be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children
- be appropriately paced and engaging
- include a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings

Assemblies are an experience of worship and can be presented in a variety of forms. They are prayerful and encourage openness to God. All assemblies begin with the Sign of the Cross, lighting of a candle and include elements of prayer and praise.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Central to the Catholic faith is the understanding that although we are all different, God loves each one of us equally, regardless of background, gender or ability. In our worship, we seek to recognise and cater for the individual needs of children, acknowledging that all children have different gifts and talents and that these should be celebrated. We aim to help children develop to their full potential and to develop a positive self-image.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, "To Know You More Clearly" Religious Education Directory, the 'Come and See' RE programme, feast days, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will often be the focus in acts of worship and a variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Acts of worship will develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship in a meaningful way.

Parents and parishioners are invited to participate in some celebrations.

Each week class, key stage and whole school worship are timetabled.

The Format for Collective Worship in our school will be:

Gather – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)

Listen – liturgies will normally centre around a text from the Bible; the Word of God will be proclaimed from a bible or lectionary or it may be presented in words or pictures on a screen to increase its accessibility to all.

Respond – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (reflection, dance, music, drama, art, poetry etc.) We place our needs before God (intercessory prayers)

Go Forth – Giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Recording

Collective Worship may be recorded in the following ways:

- on a liturgy planner to keep a note of themes, leaders and resources
- through displays, reflections, photographs, prayers, leaflets, powerpoints, class spiritual journals etc
- in the class liturgy folder
- through pupil response/in discussion or written comments

Prayer and Collective Worship in the Classroom

Each class has a Class Worship Box which contains a collection of drapes in seasonal liturgical colours, candles, crucifixes, statues, rosaries, icons, prayer pebbles etc. Copies of the relevant 'Come and See' Handbook, God/Church Story, RED and bibles are also available in each classroom as appropriate. Additional resources are housed on the resources shelves in the staffroom and outside Year 6. Music CDs are stored in the Music cupboard in the hall and the Head's Office.

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment'³

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference 'Come and See' topics/RED branches. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Class prayer tables will always feature a bible and a candle and the class spiritual journal.

There should also be a crucifix in all classrooms.

Children are given the opportunity to pray together throughout the day in their classrooms.

For example, start of the day prayer, Lunchtime prayer, End of the day prayer.

Other prayers that the children learn and may pray together in class or during wider gatherings are 'The Our Father', 'Hail Mary' (particularly during the months of May and October), 'Glory Be' and prayers written by the children.

³ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations will highlight a special occasion or feast day. They 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. Children may animate the Eucharist by preparing readings and intercessions, singing hymns and psalms, preparing offertory processions and serving.

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. Consideration will also be given to any training needs identified.

The Collective Worship Lead

Collective Worship is co-ordinated by the RE Subject Leader and the Headteacher, liaising with the Choir Director and Parish Priest as appropriate.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the RE Subject Leader and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years.

Useful links and websites

Diocese of Arundel and Brighton: Collective Worship and Prayer Life:

<https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/education/re-catholic-life>

Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Policy Guidance for Collective Worship, August 2020:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gXZgT946Jb3kSCiFaDSetqimg1p12eK/edit>

Cafod Prayers, Liturgies and Reflections:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources>

Mission Together Prayer Resources:

<https://missiontogether.org.uk/prayer-resources/>

The Bible in a Year podcasts:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/TheBibleinaYear>

The God Who Speaks resources:

<https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/primary-collective-worship-resources/>

The Mark 10 Mission:

<https://www.themark10mission.co.uk/>