



ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PRAYER AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

To love and serve one another.

THE NATURE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We believe that Christian prayer and worship at St John's Catholic Primary 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 a relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils* This usually takes place at a set time in the morning. 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 (RE). As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises and the Parish church.

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.

*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 are 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 community will provide a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationships with God, each other and will allow the school community to:

- Contemplate the mystery of God
- Unite our worshipping Eucharistic community
- Develop the skills of: contemplation, reflection, interpretation and empathy
- Fully participate in our Christian Catholic faith
- Grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding
- Grow in understanding of our living faith tradition
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ
- Examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys
- Develop the skills of prayer

IMPLEMENTATION

All acts of collective worship should:

- Give glory and praise to God
- Be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants
- Be clear in its liturgical focus and varied in its delivery

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN OUR SCHOOL

The worshipping nature of the whole school is expressed in a variety of ways. This can be through:

- individual, group and class prayer in both formal and informal styles and settings, including opportunities for prayer outside the classroom
- the sacrament of Reconciliation
- the celebration of the holy Mass
- sacramental and non-sacramental liturgical experience
- class led assemblies
- teacher led assemblies
- Benediction
- the praying of the Rosary
- worship at the Stations of the Cross

The Spiritual Life Committee is one of the Pupil Voice groups which are active in the school. The group is comprised of children in KS2 and KS1 and the group is led by the Prayer and Worship Leader. The children support the Catholic life of the school and engage in organising and leading assemblies and other opportunities for Worship. They also organise fund raising and work alongside the School Council and Green Team to do this.

PRAYER & WORSHIP

Prayer and worship are at the heart of all we do and children and staff are encouraged to grow in their prayer life. We pray together in school at assemblies and staff/governors will also pray at meetings. Children are encouraged to have moments of quiet reflection both in class and at assemblies. Prayers are said each morning and afternoon and before/after lunch. Each class follows the school's set prayers on laminated cards and says the church's traditional prayers. Children are encouraged to make a spontaneous response to situations through prayer. Through the 'Come and See' RE Scheme children are encouraged to celebrate in worship, life's experiences. Each classroom has a focal area to promote children's spiritual development. This reflects the current season and the Church's liturgical year. Staff guidance notes are available on the computer shared area. The RE Leaders are able to provide further guidance and the focal areas are regularly monitored and feedback given.

The school endeavours to encourage parents to foster the prayer life of their families through:

- Reference to the church's liturgical year in the class RE termly newsletter and school newsletter
- Home, School and Parish links
- Inviting parents and the School Community to share in our liturgical celebrations and class led assemblies and masses
- Encouraging parents to see themselves as part of our worshipping community
- Pupils' taking home the Wednesday Word

THE PLANNING, CONTENT AND DELIVERY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship is planned:

- Following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, 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 simply participating

ASSEMBLIES:

"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (*Matthew 18-20*).

On Monday there is an assembly for KS2 and Year 2 led by the Head of School, Year 1 and Reception Class have a separate age-appropriate assembly. On Tuesday we have Hymn Practice led by the Head of School for Year 2 and KS2. Year 1 and the EYFS have their own Hymn Practice on Friday afternoons and on Tuesdays they enjoy a class act of worship. On Wednesday there are Key Stage assemblies: At the KS1 assembly the achievements of children are celebrated by reading their names from the Merit Book and a Gospel reading is shared. Key Stage 2 assemblies focus on the liturgical year and other themes relevant to the lives of the children. On Thursday we have class assemblies

based on the Come & See RE programme or a liturgical season or saint. These assemblies showcase the God-given talents of the school community through song, dance and drama and they allow children to share opportunities for inclusive prayer e.g. saying prayers in the children's home languages and using sign language in songs. Assemblies are cross curricular and regularly include links to English work, ICT, Art, PSHE etc. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend class assemblies. On Friday if the class does not attend Mass they plan their own class acts of worship.

HOLY MASS:

The greatest prayer in the Catholic Church is the Mass. Having our Parish church on the same site as the school is a real blessing for the school community and on Fridays different classes on a rota basis attend Mass with parishioners. In the summer term children prepare their own Friday morning Mass and all the children are actively involved through the different parts of the Mass e.g. welcoming people, readings, offertory and altar serving. Again Parents/Carers are encouraged to join the school and parish to celebrate Mass. The school community will also attend Mass at notable times throughout the year e.g. to celebrate the start of the academic year (celebrated in the school hall to help children realise that we can pray anywhere not just in church) and Ash Wednesday.

BENEDICTION:

It is a custom of the school for the children who celebrated their first holy communion to attend a service of Benediction, to reflect on God's greatest gift of the Eucharist. To make this service memorable the First Communicants wear their special clothes and are joined by the rest of the children in KS2 and their parents.

RECORDING

Collective Worship is recorded:

- In teachers' mid-term and weekly planning sheets
- Through displays, collections of pupils' contribution, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.
- In the staff shared area there is a folder where Mass Booklets are saved.

MONITORING AND EVALUTION

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. All teachers are responsible for monitoring and the development of the prayer life of the children in their class.

RESOURCES

Resources are located in every classroom and in the RE resource cupboards (opposite Year Four). Visits to the Parish Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception are actively encouraged.

RESPONSIBILITY

The RE Subject Leader for Worship is responsible for:

- Monitoring the quality and standards of Prayer and Worship
- Supporting colleagues in Prayer and Worship
- Keeping up to date in developments in Prayer and Worship and providing a strategic lead in this area
- Maintaining and updating resources
- Liaising with the link governor for RE
- Working closely with the external RE Consultant who visits the school regularly
- Working closely with the RE Leader responsible for teaching and learning and the SLT.

POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy is monitored by the Executive Headteacher/Head of School and the Religious Education Subject Leaders. It is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Religious Education Governor, in particular will play a most important role. In addition, there is a statutory RE Policy.

Date of Policy April 2016

Date adopted by Governing Body : 3rd May 2016

Date of Review May 2018