

# Collective Worship Policy

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## Collective Worship Guidelines

God is present and active in all authentic human experience. We already have a graced life and **worship** is naming and celebrating this reality in the Christian tradition. God is reached through the world and adored within it. Creating a sacred space for worship is to create a space where the unity of God and creation is reverently symbolised and celebrated. Worship and the words and rituals we use should not sever us from the ordinary circumstances of our lives but rather unite us more closely to them.

Worship remembers and celebrates the marvellous things God works in our lives. It celebrates God's presence in our lives. Worship should not feel like an interruption from a different world. It is a spontaneous response to life.

Collective Worship 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.

Worship will be at the very heart of every Catholic school and must reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.

Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others may form part of an act of worship.

All liturgies involve the praise, thanksgiving and adoration of God and are, therefore, acts of worship. However, not all worship will be liturgy as it may or may not include symbol and action.

An assembly is any experience of gathering/assembling in school. It may include an act of worship but the difference between worship and assembly must always be clear.

God is present and active in all authentic human experience. Worship is naming and celebrating this reality in the Christian tradition. Creating a shared space for worship is to create a space where the unity of God and creation is reverently symbolised and celebrated.

Worship remembers and celebrates the marvellous ways that God works in our lives. It celebrates God's presence in our lives. It is a spontaneous response to life.

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The worship which takes place in school is Collective Worship.

Collective Worship 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.

Worship will be at the heart of our school and will reflect something special or separate from ordinary school activities.

## Liturgy

*The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows*

[This is the Liturgy 10]

"Liturgy" literally means, "work of the people", and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action. Liturgy makes explicit the celebration deriving from and highlighting every instance of worship, which occurs in our daily lives. To liturgical celebration therefore should be brought all human symbols of expression - art, dance, poetry, music, gesture, stillness

The '*Liturgy of the Word with Children. Guidelines*' [1996 The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales] lists the **General Principles of Liturgy**:

- Liturgy is the praise and worship of God.
- Liturgy is the source and summit of the Church's life and our lives.
- It is the right and duty of all baptised, both children and adults.
- The function of the liturgy is to build up members of Christ's body, to strengthen us in preaching Christ.
- Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the whole person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.
- Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn

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through repetition and copying.

- In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.
- The purpose of adapting liturgy for children is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy of the parish.
- Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity.

## Prayer

God calls every human person into a loving relationship. This relationship, as with all others, grows through communication. Prayer is the way in which we engage in communication with God. Christians believe that prayer is essential to human fulfilment for it is only in God that we can discover ourselves, our meaning and our purpose.

Prayer consists of:

- **Listening:** being attentive to the voice of God in every moment of life.
- **Speaking:** expressing our thoughts and feelings.
- **Reflecting:** thinking about our relationship with God.  
God's actions in history and in the unfolding mystery of our lives.

**Resting:** simply being consciously in the presence of God, knowing that we are loved.

Prayer can have a variety of forms and express different things.

- **Blessing and Adoration:** blesses God for the goodness which has been shown to humankind.
- **Petition:** asks for forgiveness and calls for the establishment of the kingdom of God.
- **Intercession:** consists in asking on behalf of another.
- **Thanksgiving:** acknowledging the gifts which God has given.
- **Praise:** the prayer which praises God simply because God is.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church)

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Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others, may form part of an act of worship.

Through the *Come and See* programme children at St. Cuthbert's and St. Sebastian's are introduced to a variety of forms and styles of prayer in a developmental way.

During Collective Worship they are given opportunity to use a variety of styles and forms of prayer. From the initial school years children at St. Cuthbert's and St. Sebastian's are introduced to repetitive prayers, gestures, hymns, music, traditional prayers (suited to the age of the children) litanies, and processions in the classroom, whole school and Church setting.

## **Collective Worship Policy**

### **Introduction**

This Collective Worship Policy was recommended by the Archdiocese and was agreed to be implemented in St. Cuthbert's and St. Sebastian's by The Governing Body, Head teacher, and all teaching staff in July 2012.

### **Statement of intent:**

Collective Worship at St. Cuthbert's and St. Sebastian's provides opportunities for all staff and children to come together to worship God. Whilst respecting diversity of belief and commitment, it will be Catholic in character, reflecting the liturgical tradition of the Church and having Christ at its heart. It will take 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
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience.

- To which all can contribute
- From which all can gain.

### **Aims**

Through our worshipping together we aim to:

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- Enable and encourage a sense of belonging to a community with a common ethos and shared values  
St. Cuthbert's 'In love with Christ. Be the best I can. Be kind to one another.'
- St. Sebastian's 'In love with Christ. Only my best will do. Be kind to one another.'
- Respond to and celebrate life by taking time out to 'wonder at', mark as special
- Contemplate something of the mystery of God
- Enrich the religious experience of all members of the school community
- Reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- Build a firm foundation for liturgy.

## Who?

- The governing body and RE Governors (Mrs Carol-Anne Murphy and Mr Richard Milligan) are responsible for ensuring that the school has a current Collective Worship policy
- The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that Collective worship is provided for each child each day
- Class teachers are responsible for planning and enabling Collective Worship to take place daily

## Where?

Collective worship can take place:

- Within the classroom
- In the school hall
- In the open

"As a rule all acts of Collective Worship should take place on the school premises. However, the governing bodies of grant maintained, aided and special agreement schools have discretion to organise Collective Worship elsewhere on special occasions."

(Education Reform Act 1988)

## When?

***It is a legal requirement that every child must have an opportunity to take part in Collective Worship every day.***

To ensure that Collective Worship is a meaningful and prayerful opportunity for

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all participants it needs to occur at the most appropriate time for the class/ key stage / school. Class teachers are encouraged to look at their weekly curriculum and place Collective Worship at a time which enables the children to have a quality experience.

## How?

Leader: it can be led by:

- Headteacher / Deputy head /RE Coordinator / Father Mark
- Class teacher
- Children
- Visitors

In order to provide children with quality experiences of Collective Worship, teachers at

St. Cuthbert's and St. Sebastian's will:

- Ensure that the theme, focus, delivery, length and resources are appropriate to the interests, age range, backgrounds and abilities of learners (time: approximately one minute for each year of a child's life)
- Set an appropriate atmosphere with a sense of order and occasion, including entry and exit (use of music / lighting)
- Provide a focus using artefacts, candles, symbols etc
- Respect the freedom of learners and staff in the invitation to prayer and worship
- Ensure the possibility of conscious, active participation of all present

Teachers will use a variety of building blocks

- Short address/personal experience
- Readings: Scripture / poetry / story
- Drama / dance / song / role play
- Artefacts / posters / natural materials
- Time for reflection / silence
- Prayer: informal / formal (Psalms / children's own prayers etc)
- Responses (e.g. saying / singing)

Planning and Recording

Planning will be done with reference to:

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- Come and See topics, the Church's seasons, significant dates
- The whole curriculum
- Local, national, world events

## What to include on planning sheet for Collective Worship.

When Teachers plan Collective Worship...

**Preparation:** When, where, who, what? What resources will I need? Create focus. Send invitations

**Gathering:** How will we begin / enter - to music? Create an atmosphere of prayer. Use a 'gathering chant' Come in procession.

**Listen:** Reading from scriptures, psalms, poems etc. Use power point. Pause at times for quiet contemplation. Dramatise the readings.

**Respond:** What do pupils will do. Quiet reflection, formal / informal prayer / respond to bidding prayers. Place stone at foot of cross etc.

**Go Forth:** What will I do to help the children take the message away with them - prayer card, picture, common prayer

## **When children plan Collective Worship:**

### **Gather**

- What music might you play?
- How will you arrange the children?
- Will you light the candle(s)?
- Can you find an appropriate picture / poster / artefact? - explain it.

### **Listen**

- Who will read?
- What will you read?  
( Scripture / Prayer / Psalm / Poem / Story / Hymn)
- Will you act out the reading? Or use a Power Point presentation?

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## **Respond**

- How will you help your friends to reflect on what they have read?
- Will you say prayers that need a response?
  
- Who will lead the prayers?

## **Go Forth**

- What do you want your friends to take away from this Act of Worship to remember its message.

Collective Worship will be recorded through:

- Planning sheets
- Collections of learner's contributions/prayers, reflections
- Photographs / display

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The Federated schools of St. Cuthbert's and St. Sebastian's



## Collective Worship Planner

Class:	Leader:	Date:
Gather		
Listen		
Respond		
Go Forth		

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## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

We will review this policy annually with reference to the variety of experiences offered to our children. We will assess its implementation and effectiveness. This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout our school.