



St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary school

Collective Worship Policy

Status: Approved

Governing Committee: Curriculum

Created by: Teresa Harvey

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St Mary's is a Catholic primary school where every child will be encouraged to develop as a unique individual. The Catholic faith underpins all aspects of the child's education. We will strive to be a positive force in the life of the church by creating a community where the principles of the Gospel are evident.

Collective Worship for St Mary's RC Primary School.

The Nature of Collective Worship.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school 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.

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

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.

- 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 develop the skills of:
 - Reverence
 - Contemplation
 - Reflection
 - Interpretation
 - Empathy
 - meditation
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding.
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ.

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

- 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
- Celebrations will:
 - 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.
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How Collective Worship is organised at St Mary’s

- Monday: Led by Head or Deputy. Lasts 20 minutes. Whole School Assembly.
- Tuesday: Gospel assembly. Led by two members from the SLT. Lasts 20 minutes. Whole School. Based on Gospel from the following Sunday’s Mass.
- Wednesday: Class Collective Worship. Led by Class Teacher initially and then led by the children. Lasts 20 minutes. Based on Values for Life Scheme. Planned by Teachers initially and then by the children and evidence collated in a book by teachers.
- Thursday: Whole School Singing. Led by Head teacher. Worship through song.
- Friday: (Morning): Whole School Assembly. Led by Head or Deputy. Lasts 20 minutes. Canon Millett, is invited to this Assembly.
(afternoon): Whole School. Lasts 15 minutes. One week: Prayers. Second Week is Celebration Assembly.

Members of staff attend all act of worship.

Whole school collective worship topics, include links with whole school topics, Catholic values and virtues, a theme related to children’s experiences. A response related to an event or reaffirmation of the Catholic mission of the school.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church’s seasons, 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 format for Collective Worship for our school will be:

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

³ Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

- ❖ **Proclaim** – every liturgy will centre around at least one text from the Bible, with the reading of the day being the first source. The Word of God will be proclaimed from a bible or lectionary.
- ❖ **Respond** – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (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 is recorded:

- Through Class Collective Worship books.
- Class Assembly Photos.
- Diary: Theme of Week and who it is led by.

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

Values for Life Scheme of Work to support Staff.

Gospel Books to help with Gospel Assembly.

Class Bibles have been brought to support Staff with their Class Collective Worship.

Artefacts

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.

The Children's Eucharistic prayer is used for whole school and class masses.

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 Senior Leaders 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

COMMUNICATION

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors regarding matters of concern and development
- 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 Parish Priest

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ONGOING FORMATION

- Leading and organising inservice training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back

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.

Updated September 2013.