



# Collective Acts of Worship and the Liturgical Life of the School



***The School mission statement:  
I can do all things with the help of God who strengthens me.  
Philippians (4:13)***

Collective Worship and liturgy are an integral part of life at St Edmund's Catholic School. They play a key role in encouraging spiritual and moral growth and in generating an understanding of faith and a love of God.

St Edmund's Catholic School has a strong Catholic ethos which is emphasised by the aim of the School to "encourage spiritual development and understanding of the faith handed down to us by the church".

The Catholic ethos permeates every aspect of life in the School. The ethos is expressed in a particular way in prayer, assemblies, various liturgies, the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist in school.

Liturgy and ethos are closely intertwined and both foster an atmosphere where pupils and staff treat each other with respect and all members of the community care for each other. The ethos of the School endeavours to promote Gospel values and create an environment where each child can develop fully their God given gifts and learn to take their place as a responsible citizen in the world; aware and respectful of the rights of all people and compassionate to the needs of others.

The School aims to give each member of the community an experience of living in a Catholic community based on Christian values.

St Edmund's welcomes those of other faiths who attend the school. Whatever the faith background of our students, St Edmund's will ensure that they have the opportunity to explore and develop their spiritual life in a secure and positive environment, where tolerance, mutual respect for one another and learning are some of our guiding principles.

## **Collective Worship**

***"For wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" Matt 18:20***

An act of collective worship is expected to be made available to pupils every day. This may take the form of an act of worship during an assembly or in tutor time. It may also be the celebration of Eucharist or Reconciliation, either in school or on special occasions at St John's Cathedral.

## **Full School Masses**

*“The Eucharist is the heart and summit of the churches life” (CCCC)*

During each term, the School celebrates a full School Mass or Liturgy held at St John’s Cathedral. These Masses are celebrated by our priest chaplain, or by one of the priests from our parishes.

At other times of the year Mass will be celebrated at St John’s Cathedral for example

- In September we have our Year 7 induction Mass
- In May we have our Year 11 leavers Mass

Although pupils from other Christian denominations and religions cannot receive communion at the Mass the School has always wished to include them as fully as possible in liturgical services. All children are therefore encouraged to receive a blessing at this time.

## **Other whole school liturgical celebrations**

The School celebrates the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent which takes the form of a Penitential liturgy celebrated in Year groups. This is followed by the opportunity of receiving individual reconciliation and absolution from one of our parish priests.

Non Eucharistic Liturgies are also celebrated to mark Ash Wednesday and other occasions such as The Stations of the Cross during Lent.

## **Assemblies**

Each year group has one assembly per week and part of each assembly includes an act of worship.

Assemblies may be taken by Heads of Learning, a tutor or tutor group, the School Chaplain or a member of the Senior Management Team. They may on occasion be led by a visiting priest or minister.

The themes for the assemblies are chosen by a delegated SMT member and on occasion by the person or group leading the assembly, usually based on the liturgical year or may be from an event or anniversary that has occurred.

The assembly at times may involve the proclamation of the word of God and singing a hymn chosen to reflect the theme of the assembly and prayers. Opportunity for reflection and intercessory prayers are encouraged.

## **Tutor prayers**

Each tutor is expected to provide an act of worship every morning when they do not attend assembly. The format of tutor prayers may vary from class to class but could involve a variety of activities including

- Bible stories
- Poems
- Music
- Prayers for friends and relations
- Reflections on world or local events
- Power points
- Themes such as understanding, forgiveness etc.,
- Year Prayer Booklets

Every Tutor group from Year 7-Year 11, write their own tutor prayer at the start of the academic year. These prayers are then collated and are put into Year level booklets a long with various prayers e.g., Our Father, Hail Mary, Morning Offering, Angelus. This then is given to each Tutor as a resource for their prayer time.

Resources, guidance and activities are made available from the chaplaincy.

## **Tutor Masses**

Each tutor group in in Year 7 and 8 are given the opportunity to celebrate Mass together at least once each academic year.

These Masses take place on Friday lunchtimes in the School Chapel. Each Tutor group celebrate together as it is part of their criteria for their spiritual badges. Tutors are expected to attend the Mass with their tutor group.

The Mass is open to any member of the community who wishes to attend as well as the tutor group concerned.

On the morning of their designated tutor Mass (period 1 Friday) the tutor group will go to the Chapel. They will be taught about the meaning and celebration of the Mass by the Chaplain in preparation for their lunchtime celebration. Every student is encouraged to use their gifts and talents during the Mass and every student has a role to play e.g., singing, reading, prayers of the faithful, alter serving offertory procession, liturgical movement.

## **Music and Liturgy**

***“He who sings prays twice” (St Augustine.)***

Music is an important part of prayer and worship. The music department work closely with the chaplaincy team to provide suitable music for liturgies and acts of worship. The Director of Music will liaise with the Chaplain and Heads of Learning to choose relevant music for assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to develop their God given

talents by playing and singing in liturgies. Pupils are also encouraged to participate in liturgies through dance, drama, poetry and art as a fitting expression of their spiritual life.

### **Primary Schools**

Each year our school and our local Catholic primary feeder schools choose a theme and put on a Cluster Celebration Evening. The evening is a time to reflect on scripture, to have some related drama as well as each school performing a song. This takes place in St John's Cathedral and is supported by the local clergy, community and parents of the students.

During the year, a group of Chaplaincy Team members, accompanied by the Chaplain, visit our local Catholic primary schools and provide an assembly for the school. This enables our students to grow in confidence in providing a relevant and interactive assembly and enables younger students to see that prayer and reflection are important in life.

### **Spiritual badges and prayer coins**

Every student from Year 7 – 10 is encouraged to attain their spiritual badges. At the end of the summer term award assemblies are put on for each year group, during that time the spiritual badges are awarded. There is a set of criteria for each year group to achieve, The criteria is based on attending various liturgical celebrations and Masses within the school, being involved in raising money for various charities, participating in tutor prayer or attending our school evening Carol Concert or other Masses or liturgical celebrations in the diocese. The spiritual badge criteria also inclusive of students of other faiths who attend a religious event within their own faith community.

Each year group has specific criteria:

Year 7 and 8 will attend a retreat day

Year 9 will have a vocation morning

Year 10 have a PSHE lesson in the hall with the Chaplain where they have time to stop and reflect and become more aware of their own giftedness, talents and self-awareness, through meditation and reflection.

Year 11 students have their Leavers Mass where they receive a prayer coin which they can keep in their pocket.

### **Lunchtime prayer and worship**

On Tuesday lunchtimes The Rosary is said in the Chapel, a number of the Chaplaincy Team meet to pray the Rosary and to pray for the needs of the school community. This prayer time is open to any student or staff member.

On regular occasions our Youth Worker comes into school and spends time with our students.

On Wednesday and Thursday we have our Angelus said in the playground by the Eagle. A group of students and the Chaplain say the prayer at midday on behalf of the whole school community.

Friday lunchtime is when we have our Tutor Masses.

### **Staff prayer and worship**

Each Wednesday the Chapel is open for staff prayer at 8 a.m. Some members of staff attend and spend time in praying for the needs of the community and have a time of reflection, followed by breakfast which is facilitated by the chaplain.

At the start of the staff briefing each Friday morning, the Head teacher reads out the Gospel for the coming Sunday. The Head will also on occasion take this opportunity to pray for the needs of the school community.

A staff twilight retreat is offered each year at the end of the summer term. It is a time for the staff to reflect, rejoice and relax.

### **Chaplaincy**

Many students from Year 7 –Year 11 are involved in various aspects of the Chaplaincy Team. The team meet regularly for reflection, prayer and planning for various liturgies.

### **Chapel**

The Chapel is open to all faiths and is a place of quiet. It is available for anyone to drop in to pray, to have quiet time or to have a chat with the Chaplain.

### **Chaplain**

The role of the chaplain is laid down in their job description, but the Chaplain along with the Assistant Head teacher and Director of Learning for RE is responsible for arranging whole School liturgies and celebrations and for arranging tutor Masses, Reconciliation Services. The Chaplain is able to advise all staff and pupils about prayer and worship and provides resources for tutor prayer and other liturgies.

This policy was last updated in November 2015.