

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

St Joseph's school is a Christian community in which individuals are valued and respected, and encouraged to reach their full potential and be
'The Best They Can Be'
Faith, Hope, Love.



Policy for Collective Worship

Our ethos is one that nurtures education through recognition and celebration of all children's experiences and achievements, whatever the context. Each child is unique and made in the likeness of God. Every child should succeed at their own level and be praised for this success

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Mission Statement

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

St Joseph's school is a Christian community in which individuals are valued and respected, and encouraged and encouraged to be the best they can be, through Faith, Hope, Love

Catholicity

Our ethos is one, which nurtures education through the recognition and celebration of all children's experiences and achievements, whatever the context.

All staff value pupils' efforts and work and recognise that children progress at different rates.

Each child is an individual and all staff look to assess how near a child is to meeting their potential. Every child is unique and made in the likeness of God. Every child should succeed at their own level and be praised for this success.

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 a relationship with Godself, 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 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 head teacher.

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.

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 enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, 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.

In order to do this, celebrations will:

- be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
- be short and appropriately paced be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Where, when Collective Worship takes place

Monday - whole school gathering in school hall worship is lead by Head Teacher or teacher in charge. It is based on the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. All staff to attend

Tuesday –This can be a whole school or Key Stage gathering lead by a member of staff, linked to the liturgical time of the year, or saints.

Wednesday - Hymn practice with a theme linked to the RE curriculum, liturgical year or school Mass

Thursday – class prayers/class Mass

Friday - whole school gathering in school Hall worship lead by Head Teacher or teacher in charge. This is an opportunity to celebrate and share the gifts and talents that individual children have been blessed with. All staff to attend

Visitors who lead assembly help to enrich the experience of the pupils. Acts of worship will follow the patterns of Catholic prayer used by the school.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

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.

Evaluations after key events will be sought by the KS2 children (Harvest liturgy, Advent and Lent Retreat, Liturgy for our Lady)

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

Class Masses held in the convent parishioners and Marist sisters involved in Mass

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will 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.

Appendix 1

GUIDELINES ON NURTURING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

DEFINITIONS

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 the term used in legislation in this country but it is not a phrase we would readily use in a Catholic context.

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 a relationship with Godself, 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” and “liturgy” are terms more commonly used in the Catholic context.

Prayer

One of the Early Fathers of the Church described prayer as “... the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” These words of St John Damascene have become a classical definition of prayer and they point to the reason why, in a Catholic school, we begin and end each session of the day in prayer. Prayer can be of different types and express different things. The old acronym of A.C.T.S. may be helpful here. The letters stand for Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving and Supplication and give an insight into four different types of prayer.

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

Liturgy

“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.

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 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.

For the sake of simplicity we can divide liturgy preparation into four parts:

Gathering – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/reflective music, lighted candles, statues, etc.)

Word – a reading from the Scriptures (or another suitable source), breaking the Word, time to reflect on this, and prayers to fit in with the theme.

Action – a ritual/movement that everyone can join in with that fits with the theme (gestures such as: shaking hands, holding hands, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc.)

Mission – the sending out from the celebration giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that can take into their daily lives.

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.

PRINCIPLES

One of the most important tasks of Catholic schools is to lead children, through celebrating liturgies, towards an understanding and appreciation of prayer and the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist.

This is no easy task, given that so many children in our schools have little or no experience of celebrating sacraments in their parish communities.

For this reason, every effort must be made to give children positive liturgical experiences, based on sound educational, pastoral and liturgical principles.

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.

The school has great scope and opportunity through its daily act of worship to provide the steps needed in preparing children for the liturgical life of the church. Celebrations of various kinds which help children to understand some of the elements of liturgy (such as greeting, silence, community praise, especially in song) have a great part to play in their liturgical formation. They are part and parcel of school acts of worship. Such experiences help children's spiritual development and may eventually lead them to a desire to celebrate Mass and the sacraments beyond the community of the school.

A Developmental Approach

Children are best introduced to prayer and liturgy in a step by step approach. Asking children to pray in a way they are not capable of, or in a manner beyond their years, can inhibit and sometimes damage development in this area. For liturgy to be effective we need to take into account the age, aptitudes and backgrounds of the children.

In order to do this, celebrations will:

- be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
- be short and 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.

Eucharistic and Non-Eucharistic Celebrations

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will 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 and opportunities for children to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to "The Welcome Table. Planning Masses with Children" and this contains the complete text of the Church's 'Directory for Masses with Children' as a basis for our practice.

The principles expressed here lead us to conclude that in school the 'Liturgy of the Word' rather than the Eucharist will be the norm.

In planning the celebration of the Eucharist with a school group sensitivity needs to be given to the number of children who come from other denominations, other faith traditions, or from no particular faith background at all. The Eucharist is the central liturgical act of a Catholic faith community, so if there is a large proportion of people who are unable to participate fully in such a celebration it would be appropriate to think through how frequently such celebrations should take place.

Notes to be included

The Role of the Governing Body Regarding Collective Worship

Governors should be aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to Collective Worship taking account of the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, Education Act 1996 and the School Standard Framework Act 1998.

The Legal Framework

- There must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can either be a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in different school groups (i.e. a group or combination of groups in which pupils are taught or take part in school activities)
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship and this must be made clear in the policy statement Collective Worship and in the school prospectus. However, a Catholic school may make it clear to parents that worship is central to the life of a Catholic school and spontaneous acts of worship may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.
- The governing body makes arrangements for Collective Worship in a Voluntary School after consultation with the headteacher. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring requirements are met.
- In a Catholic Voluntary Aided School, governors must also take account of the School Trust Deed which states that acts of worship shall be consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.
Foundation governors have particular responsibility for seeing, so far as is practicable, that the Catholic character of the school is reflected in Collective Acts of Worship. Governors should also be familiar with any guidelines issued by the diocese.
- The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and should not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum. It must be distinctive and be able to be identified as such if it is to meet legal requirements
- As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. a church, “on a special occasion”.

Other Responsibilities

Governors should be familiar with all documentation regarding Collective Worship issued on their behalf and may be actively involved in the process of Collective Worship development in the school.

Governors should ensure that there is a development plan for Collective Worship, which is appropriately reviewed as part of the whole school development plan.

Policy for Collective Worship

The diocese has provided a model policy for Collective Worship which governors are encouraged to consider. Any policy should include the following:

The School Mission Statement.

A definition or description of the nature of Collective Worship.

The place of worship in the life of the school.

The aims of Collective Worship.

The principles of Collective Worship.
The organisation of Collective Worship (pupil groupings weekly pattern, venues etc.)
The planning, content and delivery of Collective Worship.
The recording, monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship.
Resources available for Collective Worship.
Voluntary worship and retreats.
Guidelines regarding the celebration of the Eucharist.
The management of Collective Worship (who is responsible and areas of responsibility).
The rights of withdrawal.
Policy monitoring and review.

Monitoring and evaluation

In Voluntary Aided Schools it is the overall responsibility of the governors, in consultation with the head teacher, to ensure that legal requirements are met and that opportunities for quality Collective Worship are being offered. This may be delegated to the head teacher or the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship. Those responsible will ensure that the acts of worship are in accordance with the School's Trust Deed and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

In order to ensure that effective monitoring of Collective Worship takes place the following questions need to be addressed:

Is the monitoring of Collective Worship part of the school development plan?
Is the monitoring/improvement of Collective Worship of importance to the governing body and therefore an item on the agenda?
How will the monitoring process be used to further develop Collective Worship?

What is to be monitored?

The school may have a document on curriculum monitoring which could be appropriately adapted for Collective Worship. In the absence of such a document the following may be considered:

Is sufficient time set aside to ensure that monitoring can take place? This may include observations of collective acts of worship, discussions with those who lead worship, discussions with those who experience worship (e.g. pupils, staff, parents, governors and other members of the school community).
Is the observed practice of Collective Worship consistent with policy?
Is Collective Worship adequately resourced in terms of leaders, materials, visual aids etc.?
Is there a record of, or requirement for, staff development and in-service training?
Are the various environments and groupings for Collective Worship maximising opportunities for worship?

Evaluation

Once the monitoring of Collective Worship, as described above and/or in the school audit, has been completed, it will naturally lead to an evaluation of the current position and plans for the development of Collective Worship within the school.

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 head teacher 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

Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in 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 and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development

Acting as consultant to colleagues

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 chaplain

Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ONGOING FORMATION

Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship

Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back

Keeping up to date by personal reading

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.

Budgeting efficiently