

The Federation of St James the Great and St John's Catholic Primary Schools



PRAYER AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

THE NATURE OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

We believe that Christian prayer and worship at St James the Great and St John's Catholic Primary Schools names and celebrates God's presence in our lives and helps us to develop a more spiritual life. 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 which acknowledges and celebrates the life-giving presence of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) in our lives. 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 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 and nurture 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
- To take time out to 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 which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To develop an understanding of Salvation History through meaningful engagement with the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community
- To nurture a common ethos and shared set of values
- To enrich religious experience
- To seek appropriate responses to the love of God

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 Catholic Life Committees at St John's and St James the Great are one of the Pupil Voice groups which are active in the school. The group is comprised of children in from across the year groups and 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 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).

Assemblies include Hymn Practice, as well as assemblies for respective key stages. Assemblies will also be led to share the Gospel message for the week and other notable events which focus on the liturgical year and other themes relevant to the lives of the children. They will include an opportunity for prayer and reflection and a focal area will be set up with a candle to facilitate this. Celebration assemblies include the completion of the Come and See theme or may be a class led assembly which mirrors the liturgical season or life of a 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, PHSE, etc. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend class assemblies. On any day where a class does not attend a collective assembly then the teacher must prepare and lead a class act of worship.

HOLY MASS:

The greatest prayer in the Catholic Church is the Mass.

Having strong links with the Parish community is a real blessing for each school community. The school community attend mass at notable times throughout the year and will join with the parish community on occasion on a Sunday to participate actively in the mass.

When classes lead the mass, the children are actively involved through the different parts of the Mass e.g. welcoming people, readings, offertory and altar serving. Parents/Carers are encouraged to join the school and parish to celebrate Mass. The school community comes together to celebrate mass in the school too, which further reinforces the understanding that the children can pray whenever they are, not just in a church.

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 area. Visits to the Parish Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception and St James the Great are actively encouraged.

RESPONSIBILITY

The RE Subject Leader and Leader for Worship are 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 Headteachers and the Religious Education Subject Leaders. It is evaluated and reviewed by the school staff . In addition, there is a statutory RE Policy.

Date of Policy April 2019

Date adopted by Governing Body :

Reviewed November 2024