

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School



Policy for Collective Worship

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: February 2020
Last reviewed on:	February 2020	
Next review due by:	Spring 2021	

Introduction to Collective Worship in our Catholic School

Collective worship is our community's response to God, which invites us to enter into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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 by either 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.

Definitions

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.

Prayer

One of the early fathers of the Church described prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God or requesting of good things from God." These words of St John Damascene illustrate why in this Catholic school we begin and end each session with a prayer.

Collective Worship

Collective worship is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with Him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and witness of the Holy Spirit.

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 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 community will provide a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationships with God. Collective worship gives us the opportunity:-

- To contemplate the mystery of God;
- To develop an understanding of Salvation History through meaningful engagement with the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation;
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues;
- To foster and nurture relationships;
- To respond to and 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 grow in liturgical understanding and development;
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition;
- To seek appropriate responses to the love of God;
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to term with' and 'to give worth to.'
- To develop the necessary skills of:
 - reverence
 - contemplation
 - reflection
 - interpretation
 - empathy
 - meditation

which will enable our relationships with God to be deepened.

Full participation in our faith will allow us:-

- To grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding;
- To grow in understanding of our living faith tradition;
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ;
- To examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys;
- To develop the skills of prayer.

Implementation

All acts of worship should:-

- Give glory and praise to God;
- Be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants;
- Be kept to the point (and brief wherever possible);
- Be clear in their liturgical focus and varied in their delivery;

Whole school assemblies take place on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays. Children are involved in the planning and delivery of the liturgies. On Monday and Fridays, classes worship in their classrooms.

Father Mario is our parish priest, he celebrates Mass in the school with the children and staff on Holy days of obligation and at other times during the school year.

One class attends Mass at our parish church, Our Lady Help of Christians, and each half term.

Collective worship in our school may follow the pattern or variation of the pattern detailed below:-

Gathering - how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/ reflective music, lighted candles, statues, sign of the cross, focus and examination of conscience etc);

Word - a reading from the Scriptures (or another suitable source), breaking the word, time to reflect on this and prayers to fit into 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 onto from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the RE co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff every two years. We will use a combination of the following to evaluate our acts of collective worship;

- Time set aside for collective worship;
- Practice is consistent with agreed policy;
- Collective worship is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc;
- Staff development on collective worship and its impact;
- Prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing pupils into prayer;
- Impact on pupils and members of the school community;
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access worship and prayer;
- Involvement, enjoyment, attention, reaction of learners
- The growth of respect and tolerance within the school community
- Positive response to shared experience
- An atmosphere which matches the theme
- A sense of challenge
- A place in the overall plan of the school
- Enrichment of learner's experience

Right of Withdrawal:

As a Catholic school we expect all children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from religious worship, and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during that part of the assembly.

Parents and carers do not have to explain or give reasons for their request. This right of withdrawal complies with the 1944 Education Act, and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

The Headteacher will keep a record of all children who have been withdrawn from collective worship.