

St Michael's RC Primary School Policy for Collective Worship



Mission Statement

At St Michael's RC Primary School we aim to promote a learning community based on the Gospel Values of love, tolerance and forgiveness where the achievements of everyone are recognised and celebrated.

"I have come that you may have life, and have it to the full."

(John 10,10)

The Nature of Collective Worship

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. 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 relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.'

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, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Head Teacher.

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 will 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, within Come and See RE curriculum.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

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.

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.

The Aims of Collective Worship

Collective Worship in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate 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 pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- 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 St Michael's RC School will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Develop pupils' skills that enable them to help prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.¹ In order to do this, celebrations will be:
 - kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;

¹ Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

- 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*);
 - simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.
- Collective worship in our school will be:

- properly planned
- adequately resourced
- recorded
- monitored
- evaluated

Planning, content and celebration

Collective Worship is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day.

Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion. Staff prayer will be celebrated daily, during the morning meeting, and at the beginning of staff meetings.

Collective Worship in St Michael's RC Primary School takes place as follows:

Monday: All staff attend morning worship as part of our staff briefing

Whole School Collective Worship

Friday: Whole School Celebration Assembly and Collective Worship

Daily prayers are shared in every class.

Every class celebrates a termly act of Collective Worship.

Whole School Liturgies take place throughout the year. (Eg Welcome Liturgy, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, Advent, etc.)

Leading collective worship

As faith leader of the school, the Head Teacher will plan and lead collective worship. In the absence of the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher (in the first instance) or a member of the senior leadership team will lead collective worship. The class teacher will lead class collective worship. Children are taught to plan and lead worship according to their age.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded in the self-evaluation (SEF48) evidence file. Each year group is to record details of Collective Worship and provide evidence of Collective Worship to show pupil participation to show progression.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Collective Worship will be monitored through collection of evidence from each year group on a termly basis and annual observations.

Collective Worship is monitored using Collective Worship monitoring form, (Appendix 1).

Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform SEF 48.

The learning environment

'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment'

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

An area for quiet prayer and reflection is set up at various points in the year and is used voluntarily by the children.

Opportunities to pray the Stations of the Cross are presented during Lent

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. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to the '*Directory for Masses with Children*' as a basis for our practice.

We believe that children are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

The Co-ordinator for Collective Worship

The Co-ordinator for Collective Worship is Nick Conway who liaises closely with the Religious Education Subject leader.

(A model job description is also included in Appendix 3.)

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years.

Appendix 1

Year Group: _____ Monitoring of Collective Worship Date: _____

Focus	Comments
Planning (discussed with teacher before or after celebration) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have the children been involved in the planning? • Has the Act of Worship been planned around a theme/feast? 	
Structure (If Liturgy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the four parts (Gather, Word, Response, Mission) be distinctly identified? • How did children gather? • Was the Word appropriate and treated reverently? 	

Appendix 2

The Role of the Coordinator for Collective Worship

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith 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
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Collective Worship and providing feedback
- Informing the head teacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and head teacher 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 Department for Education

Professional development / Ongoing formation

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

Planning group

- Consideration is to be given to the establishment of a planning group, which might include, the coordinator, the head teacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the coordinator to lead this group. Currently, regular meetings take place between the coordinator, the subject coordinator and the Parish Priest to discuss Collective Worship in school and church.