

Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School

Collective Worship



Policy Statement and Guidelines

Mission Statement:

God in our Hearts, Love in our Words, Family in our Actions

This policy should not be read in isolation but in conjunction with all school policies.

It is a legal requirement that all pupils attend a daily act of worship unless their parents have exercised their right to withdraw them from this activity. Parents will be given access to this policy so that they may make an informed decision.

The majority of these acts of worship must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character and reflect the traditions of Christian belief.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

Central to the Catholic faith is the understanding that, although we are all different, God loves each one of us equally, regardless of background, gender or ability. In our Worship, we recognise and provide for the individual needs of children, acknowledging that all the children have different gifts and talents and that these should be celebrated.

At Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School we believe that acts of worship are an integral part of a broad and enriched curriculum to which all of our children are entitled, providing opportunities for children to explore and deepen their relationship with God.

Worship is a universal human activity which can be expressed as a growing ability to celebrate and reflect on things held to be of worth. For many people worship involves commitment to a belief in God. However, it can have a much broader inclusive meaning. It can be a form of human activity when we purposely put ourselves in the position of paying particular attention to those things in life which have the greatest meaning for us.

When planning worship we should have regard for pupils' ages, aptitudes and family background. At Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School we have pupils from secular backgrounds as well as those from a variety of strong religious traditions and we value the contributions which all groups make.

We believe that good practice in collective worship will enable pupils to:

- * Develop an awareness and understanding of the spiritual dimension of life;
- * Develop a moral and caring attitude and code of conduct;
- * Develop openness and empathy;
- * Experience a feeling of togetherness and sharing;
- * Explore feelings such as awe, wonder, mystery and joy;
- * Celebrate special occasions;
- * Celebrate the work and achievements of themselves and others;
- * Celebrate the beliefs, attitudes and values held to be of central concern to our community;
- * Understand and appreciate the diversity of faiths in our school;

- * Think of the needs of others;
- * Pause for reflection and/or prayer;
- * Respond to a variety of stimuli;
- * Revere or venerate a divine being or power;
- * Develop a sense of sharing, unity and belonging;
- * Experience stillness and quiet.
- * Familiarise themselves with traditional formal prayers.
- * Develop their skills of prayer
- * Compose their own formal prayers
- * Celebrate the Eucharist, linking closely with Liturgical celebrations
- * Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Principles

All acts of worship will:

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

Guidelines for Implementation

Collective worship must be daily for all pupils unless their parents have decided to withdraw them. In these cases the pupils must be supervised by a member of staff.

Collective worship may be at any time of the day and in various groupings. At Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Primary School the groupings will include whole school, key stages and individual classes.

We aim to create an atmosphere of calmness prior to and during worship. Children are therefore expected to be silent upon entering the hall. Music will often be played whilst children are entering or leaving the hall to provide an atmosphere for individual reflection.

Principles

The essential principles which apply to any act of worship are **reflection, response** and **reverence**. The reading of scripture is a central part of collective worship.

Reflection

Time should be taken to reflect on a stimulus. To focus attention the person leading the assembly may, for example, light a candle, show a picture, play some music, ask for stillness

or read an evocative poem. The aim is to identify a time which is respected by all present and which enables pupils and staff to reflect on a particular issue.

Response

Worship demands a level of involvement, but involvement in worship is ultimately the decision of each individual. Nevertheless, it is important to provide opportunities which can be responded to in some way. Pupils' responses may be expressed through silent thoughts, or more overtly by responding to questions, repeating or reciting responses, prayer, singing together, music, movement or dance. Pupils should see that they, as well as members of staff and visitors, can take on a variety of roles in collective worship such as leadership, contribution and participation.

Reverence

Creating a sense of reverence can be seen as a culmination of the other elements involved in worship. It can be directed towards the recognition of a supreme being, or the recognition, affirmation and celebration of the worthiness of those realities and values held to be of central importance to our community.

Formal Words of Prayer

These are gradually introduced as part of 'God Matters' and may be learned by heart or regularly used and therefore familiar. (See Appendix 4)

Themes

There is a 4 year rolling programme of themes which include topics such as honesty and friendship which have links to all faiths.

Presenters, including representatives from other faiths, will base their assemblies around the theme choices which are contained as appendices to these guidelines.

Themes such as honesty and love are central to the teaching of Christianity as well as to other faiths. Therefore representatives from other faiths will be invited to contribute to acts of worship.

Themes will include the major festivals of several religions and will follow events in the Liturgical calendar and guidance from the 'God Matters' programme.

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