



ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Prayer Life and Worship Policy [January 2020]

This policy should be read in conjunction with our mission statement, RE policy and Learning and Teaching Policy.

Our Mission Statement



The Nature of Prayer Life in St Mary's (to include Collective Worship)

We believe that our prayer life in St Mary's Catholic Primary 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.'*¹

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 headteacher.

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 Prayer in the Life of St Mary's School

Prayer Life in St Mary's School however, is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. We do not only pray at school during collective worship. Children are encouraged and enabled to pray as a normal and instinctive part of their life.

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Prayer life 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.

The Aims of Prayer / Collective Worship

Prayer Life in St Mary’s School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to 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 Mary’s School will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead worship;
- 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.² Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.
- Be a time for stillness and quiet reflection.
- Be open to all members of the school, parish, local community, offering a welcoming and accepting gathering of faith and love.

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, Holocaust Memorial Day and Remembrance Sunday. We also respond in prayer and action to world news and events e.g The election of a new Pope and the Philippine typhoon disaster. Parishioners and parents are invited to participate in celebrations.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

- Traditional Catholic prayers
- Reflection and meditation
- Children’s own prayer responses
- Hymns
- Intercessions

When planning a prayer / liturgy / collective worship teachers must consider how each of the following elements will be met:

Time and Space	Where/When will it take place? How will the children be seated?
Focus	What will be the focal point? What will children look at? Table with candle, Bible, cross, flowers, focus object. Powerpoint Prayer sheet Will children bring anything to add to the focus?

² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Music	Singing? Instruments? Hymns? Calm music? Contemporary music?
Gather	How to unify the community? Bring all together – make it meaningful The sign of the cross describes a mystery not just the beginning and end of prayer.
Prayer	Hymns are prayers Traditional prayers Incense Spontaneous prayer Intercessions (“we pray for...”) Stones / ribbonssomething concrete Children writing own prayers Prayers at different times of the day – vary them
Reflection	Time to reflect, to think back, to apply to own lives.
Going Forth	How will the children move on / go forward? What will they take away (physically or cerebrally)? How will they remember?

Whole staff meetings / INSET begin with a time of reflection and prayer most often led by the headteacher.

The timetable of Collective Worship is as below.

Monday - the whole school joins together for Gospel worship focusing on the readings from mass on Sunday. This is led by the headteacher.

Tuesday - the whole school gather together to worship through song.

Wednesday - there are Key Stage worship, these are led on a rota basis by the teachers. They focus on festivals, feast days, liturgical calendar events and PSHE focuses.

Thursday - each class has their own classroom worship led by the children. Key Stage 2 classes will be introduced to joining the Parish at Mass in some of these sessions.

Friday - the school gather together to celebrate the gifts God has given us and how we use them for good in our school community.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded in:

School Spiritual Journal

Newsletters

A and B News

RE books

Reflective Journals

Displays and prayer corners

School Facebook and Twitter pages

Monitoring and Evaluation

Collective Worship is monitored using Collective Worship monitoring form

Books are monitored by using Work Scrutiny form

Prayer corners are monitored using Prayer Area monitoring form

Displays are monitored using Display monitoring form

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

Resources

- Every class has a selection of cloths to match the liturgical seasons. A candle, a cross and a handheld prayer cross.
- There are central resources and boxes for each class with artefacts, symbols and objects that are appropriate to the children and the topics of study.

- Each class has its own nativity set that is age and stage appropriate
- Central resource of cloths and candles and books available for all to use for school displays and worships.
- We have our own chalice and paten for use in masses in the school.
- We have a range of music to support worship.

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'*³

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school reflect the liturgical season and reference Come and See topics and are an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Retreats

We run a retreat day for the Year 6 children at the end of their time at St Mary's to help them celebrate their achievements whilst at the school and to celebrate the gifts they have received from God that they can take with them on their journey through life. This day also gives children a time to air any concerns they have with moving forward.

Other opportunities

We regularly celebrate mass with the parish community either in the school hall or in the parish church. At Christmas the children of KS1 perform a nativity play. At Easter the children of Year 4 present a portrayal of the Easter story. Other celebrations include Ash Wednesday, Candlemas, Stations of the Cross, May celebration of Mary and Reconciliation Service with opportunity for individual confession twice a year in Lent and Advent.

Children are encouraged and led in prayer at the beginning of the day, before lunch and at the end of the school day. Every prayer corner has a book for children to record their own prayers and share them with their classmates.

Eucharist

Each term we have a school mass either at the parish church or in the school hall.

Our Year 3 class are invited to make their First Holy Communion and the programme of study is closely followed in the school so that the whole class understand what is being undertaken.

KS2 will join the parish for mass on a rota system.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship and Prayer Life coordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

January 2020

³ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005