



Our Lady Seat of Wisdom Umbrella Trust

Policy for Collective Worship

1. The Nature of Collective Worship.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school 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.¹

2. Legal Requirements.

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils.² (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 Catholic Voluntary Academy, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

3. The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our Schools

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
- Those from other faith backgrounds – or none

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.

¹ It is important to be clear about our use of terminology when dealing with the whole area of 'Collective Worship' in schools. 'Collective Worship' is a term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we use readily in a Catholic context. 'Prayer' and 'Liturgy' are terms more commonly used in our context and are explored in greater depth in the guidelines.

² 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 need to 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.

4. **The Aims of Collective Worship.**

We believe that Catholic Collective Worship in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs, and understand Catholic belief
- 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 reinforce 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.'

5. **Principles**

All Acts of Worship in these schools will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, 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.³ In order to do this, celebrations will:
 - be kept appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
 - be 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);
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.
 - Draw on the full range of catholic liturgical and devotional tradition.

6. **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', significant 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 always participating or contributing in a token way.

7. **Recording**

Collective Worship is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

8. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

At least once a year 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.

³ Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

9. **Voluntary Worship and Retreats**

There should be scope for voluntary worship opportunities.

For instance, there may be Lunchtime Rosary during October or during Holy week there may be a chance for pupils to visit the Stations of the Cross in the Hall.

There will be an opportunity for Y5 and 6 pupils to voluntarily attend the Hallam Padley Pilgrimage. This will be a walking event with stations for prayer and reflections.

Y6 will take part in a 1 day retreat in collaboration with our school partners, and other year groups will aim to come together to worship collectively.

10. **Eucharist**

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion (e.g. the leavers' mass, Feast of St Peter & Paul) and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. At present, our schools believe that all pupils can take part in Eucharistic celebrations, aided by older pupils. 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 Welcome Table. Planning Masses with Children***" which contains the complete text of the Church's '***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.

At Key Stage 1 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory rites in the Mass and/or The Liturgy of the Word

At Key Stage 2 worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies with ritual and variety
- occasional liturgies reflecting the Introductory Rites in the mass or The Liturgy of the Word; or aspects of the Eucharistic liturgy; and/or the Communion Rite.

11. **The Co-ordinator for Collective Worship**

The Co-ordinators for Collective Worship are Peter Delamere (St Marie's), Jude Murphy (St Thomas of Canterbury) and Mark Conway (St Wilfrid's).

12. **Policy Monitoring and Review**

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship Co-ordinators and is evaluated and reviewed by the Umbrella schools' staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role.

March 2015

Collective Worship at St Marie's

St Marie's meets as a whole school in the Hall on Monday mornings from 10 10 am until break time at 10 30am. This gathering is usually led by the head teacher and focuses on scripture and prayer. The Statement of Belief, our focus for the week, is introduced at this gathering. Pupils are encouraged to join in using our interactive screen. This act of worship always contains a hymn or sacred song. Some of this time is 'secular' –assembly notices and items of note. There is always a clear distinction between the two parts of the assembly, with the liturgical beginning and ending marked by the sign of the cross.

The school also meets at the end of the school week on Friday afternoon for half an hour. Thus the school week is started and ended by acts of worship. This Assembly is generally led by a class. The Class may take any theme but will always include some 'breaking of the word' ,prayers and hymn or sacred song. Parents and carers are made welcome at this occasions.

There are also Key stage assemblies. These take place on Tuesday afternoon for KS2 and KS1 in the Hall and for KS1. These are led by individual staff. These may take up the theme of the Monday Assembly and reiterate it or follow some other relevant theme. There is scope for exploring scripture and song.

Class Collective worship takes place on days when there is neither a key stage nor a whole school Assembly. Pupils in KS2 are encouraged to lead these acts of worship. In Upper KS2 pupils may use Powerpoint presentations to lead worship. CDs with appropriate music are available.

Mass is celebrated in the School Hall. Masses take place on Holy Days of Obligation and at other special times of the year (e.g. start of the school year, beginning of advent) as arranged between the school leadership and our chaplain. Parents and carers are always invited.

Pupils may also attend mass and other liturgies outside the school, e.g. at the Churches in our feeder parishes when appropriate, at the Cathedral for Chrism Mass, Padley Pilgrimage or with our collaboration school partners.

A variety of special liturgies are celebrated within the year, e.g. Stations of the Cross during Lent, Advent prayer, praying the Rosary, at a variety of settings involving different groups or the whole school. These will include giving some experience of celebrating important feasts of the church.

When the school gathers together, older and younger children are partnered in order to assist all to partake in the liturgy, and feel as one community.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship

Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship

- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship which may at times form part of the school development plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family 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 headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Collective Worship
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher 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 RE Centre

Professional development / Ongoing formation

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