

St. Joseph's Specialist School & College
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Acts of Collective Worship Policy



Christ in our Lives
'No limits ... just possibilities'

Reviewed: June 2017
Subject
3 yearly

WEBSITE POLICY

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Mission Statement

The staff, parents, pupils, students and governors of St Joseph's Specialist School & College, together we will create a supportive Catholic ethos within a Christian environment, with aims, structures and curricula designed to achieve the full potential of all pupils and students.

The Nature of Collective Worship

A Catholic School and College is part of the wider Church and therefore part of a sacramental community. We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school is a part of the Church's action as the Body of Christ, 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 power of the Holy Spirit.¹

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils and students.² (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils and students, 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 Executive Principal and the Leader of Catholic Life.

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.
- Those from no faith background

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

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 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.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life, conforming to the norms and teachings of the Catholic Church and central to our Catholic tradition and identity.

The Aims of Collective Worship

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

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To enter into relationship with God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs and feelings
- 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 develop the skills of:
 - Reverence
 - Contemplation
 - Reflection
 - Interpretation
 - Empathy
 - Meditation
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding.
- To reinforce prayers and practices which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ.

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Lead pupils and students to a greater understanding of the Word of God expressed in the Bible and religious stories
- Celebrations will:
 - be short and appropriately paced
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.
 - include singing, drama and other forms of participation

- use a range of multisensory resources to gain and hold pupils' and students' attention and include them spiritually in the liturgy

Collective Worship is organised in our school as follows:

- *Mass or Liturgy of the Word in the school's chapel half-termly to celebrate an event in the liturgical calendar*
- *Candle Time within class groups*
- *Prayer of thanks for meals*
- *Prayer and song in many RE lessons*

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Adapted 'Come and See' programme, Key Stage 4 and 5 curricula, significant dates and the curriculum. A proclamation of the Word 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 and students skills that enable them to prepare, organise and participate in worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

The format for Collective Worship for our school will be:

- ❖ **Gather** – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)
- ❖ **Listen** – every liturgy will centre around at least one proclamation from the Bible, with the reading of the day being the first source. The Word of God will be proclaimed from a bible or lectionary.
- ❖ **Respond** – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (dance, music, drama, silence, art, poetry etc.) We place our needs before God (intercessory prayers)
- ❖ **Go Forth** – Giving the pupils and students something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded:

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

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 students and whether these are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

Resources

Illustrated Bibles for pupils and students (various levels)

Simplified Mass readings produced by St. Joseph's staff

Puppets and other figures

Music

Musical instruments

Candles and glow sticks

Interactive books and toys

Food for sensory explorations of liturgical seasons and other world faiths, and sensory experience and sharing activities

Costume

The chapel and Stations of the Cross, the outdoor areas, including Forest School

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

(E.g. sharing a lunchtime mass with parishioners during Lent, followed by a Lenten Cafod lunch)

Eucharist – the Mass

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated and made accessible to all pupils, students and staff irrespective of their faith development stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for pupils and students 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.

Mass is celebrated for the Patronal Feast in March and for Leavers in July. Other celebrations of Mass occur for extra-ordinary events, e.g. in 2015/16 a Mass to open and close the Year of Mercy and a Mass for the Induction of the Executive Principal.

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

In school, therefore, the **‘Liturgy of the Word’**, rather than the Eucharist will be the norm.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

During Advent and Lent, a penitential liturgy will be held. The Sacrament of Confession will be made available for pupils, students and staff who have made their First Confession and First Holy Communion.

Those pupils, students and staff who are not Catholic, but wish to have a one to one with the visiting priest are encouraged to do so.

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 the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite.

The Leader for Collective Worship

David Purcell, Leader of Catholic Life

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Leader of Catholic Life and is evaluated and reviewed by the SLT and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role. Governors should review reports on the prayer life of the school on a termly basis.

Appendix 1 - The Role of the Leader 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 Strategic Improvement Plan
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils and students
- 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 Pupils and Students'
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors and Executive Principal 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 Principal 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 Executive Principal 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 other members of the Chaplaincy Team
- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ONGOING FORMATION

- Leading and organising CPD activities 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

Date Policy Reviewed

Updated	Changes	By	Version
January 2014	Minor changes re Headteacher/Principal and change of Chaplain	Annie Sutton	v1.1
January 2017	<p>The Catholic School as part of the wider Church and therefore a sacramental community and part of the Body of Christ.</p> <p>Clarification on celebrations of the Mass during the School/College year.</p> <p>Introduction of a penitential liturgy in Advent and Lent and the availability of the Sacrament of Confession 'Pupils and students' to Pupils and Students</p> <p>Change of lead on RE and Catholicity</p>	David Purcell	V1.2
June 2017	Change in title to Leader of Catholicity	David Purcell	V1.3