

Collective worship Policy

St. Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School



Together with God we reach for the stars.

Approved by the Governing Body: Oct 2020

Date of review: Oct. 2023

This policy is designed to reflect and support the school's Mission Statement:

Together with God we reach for the stars.

Introduction

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

Collective Worship in St. Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary school acknowledges and celebrates the life-giving presence of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in our lives. It is through acts of shared worship, prayer and liturgy (and observance of our charisms), that the Catholic identity of our school is shaped and sustained.

Sacramental aspects of the Church's liturgical life, especially the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation are intrinsically woven into the fabric of a school's Catholic identity. Our school has a schedule of liturgical events, which will include planned for participation in mass and other Eucharistic liturgies.

The law requires all maintained schools:

- Provide daily collective worship for all pupils (section 70, 1988 Education Act)
- Acts of collective worship are not to be designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school this means that time of collective worship are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum for Religious Education
- Recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdrawn their children from Collective Worship.

In addition

- Foundation Governors in voluntary aided Catholic schools have a statutory responsibility to preserve and develop the religious character of their schools;
- The governors and the head teacher are responsible for ensuring that there are daily timetabled opportunities for whole school, class / form and year phase group worship;
- Our school must ensure that St. Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School has a named person/persons who is/are responsible for organising Collective Worship across the school
- All teachers are responsible for the monitoring and development of the prayer life of their children.
- Collective worship, in the form of prayer or liturgy, happens for all pupils daily
- All pupils are able to access the prayer and liturgy offered within the school day
- Collective Worship is well resourced, both in regard to content and the continued professional development of those planning and leading, this includes enabling pupils to plan and lead
- There is regular and comprehensive monitoring of Collective Worship which clearly demonstrates the impact of the school's Catholic mission

The Place of Collective Worship in St. Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School

We endorse the belief that Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it. It will be an activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in the 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 Collective Worship.

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

- To contemplate something of 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 reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate with others in prayer and worship
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles of Collective Worship Acts of Worship in our Catholic schools should endeavour to:

- Give praise and honour to God
- Give pupils meaningful opportunities to engage in the Sacramental Life of the Church
- Give pupils and students positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family context in order to prepare them for liturgical life of the Church
- Be of high quality, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- Be examples of good practice, which should enable pupils and students to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead Worship at St Thomas'.

The school community engages in various assemblies, acts of worship and liturgy in a variety of contexts. The week begins with an Act of collective worship; each day begins and ends with a class prayer/act of worship. At key points in the Church's Liturgical year there are special liturgies to help the school community focus more clearly on the meaning of the particular liturgical season eg Advent, Lent service and the Passion of Christ.

Collective 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
- Reconciliation and the Eucharist

An opportunity for prayers of different types-spontaneous, liturgical prayers, traditional prayers.

- Each class is able to visit the prayer room and God's garden for prayer.
- Assemblies by prayer leaders

Music and Song

In music, it is necessary to recognise that there is rich variety to be enjoyed. The social and cultural mix of the children has to be recognised and the particular needs of all those whom it includes met. It is important that no cultural group is made to feel excluded from worship. Hymns are chosen which express the mood or theme of the worship. The use of musical instruments can be very valuable especially when played by the children themselves.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned by following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, 'Come and see' programme, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship.

Eucharistic Celebrations

The Eucharist is the focus and source of Christian life.

At the beginning and end of a term and Holy days of obligation, the school community celebrates the Eucharist with parishioners in the parish church. Our aim is to lead all the children to that full, conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations especially the Holy Mass.

Every effort is made to increase the children's participation and make it a relevant experience

Resources

The resources for collective worship include a variety of Bibles, stories with a biblical theme, Prayer books, posters, artefacts, ideas for services and assemblies. The RE Subject Leader(s) is (are) always willing to help teacher's select suitable resources. A range of resources is available in the prayer room.

In each classroom there should be:

- A focus for prayer/class assemblies /worship.
- A copy of the Bible
- A crucifix
- A selection of religious books – including for example, God's Story, The Church's Story, books on the lives of Saints etc.