

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

The Mission for St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is,

"to ensure a happy and secure learning environment where we celebrate the dignity and worth of all in our school community.

As a Christian community we recognise that in loving others we love Jesus and so help each other to reach our full potential."

Therefore the implementation of our Collective Worship Policy plays an essential role in enabling us to strive towards achieving this mission for all the children in our care.

The Nature of Collective Worship

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic 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. 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. Our hope is to foster a pattern of spirituality which will continue into adulthood.

Legal Requirements

At St Bernadette's we celebrate a daily act of worship. We acknowledge this is a legal requirement. 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. (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.

As a rule, Collective Worship will take place on the school premises. However, the Governing Body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, "on a special Occasion".

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

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.

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.

The Aims of Collective Worship

At St Bernadette's we believe that our spiritual life will be alive and meaningful when it has a direct effect upon our daily life.

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

- to provide times of stillness and silence in body and mind
- to contemplate something of the mystery of God
- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues (opportunity to reflect upon feelings, negative as well as positive).
- 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 fully and enjoy moments beyond the ordinary and everyday
- to take time out to 'wonder at, and give thanks for God's creations', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give value to'.

Principles

All Collective Worship in this school will:

- raise our mind and heart to God
- celebrate the presence of God in our life and school community
- be a high quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character
- support learners' spiritual development
- give learners positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds. In order to do this, celebrations will:
 - be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
 - be short and appropriately paced (learners' attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life, that is 5-6 minutes for Key Stage 1 and 7-10 minutes for Key Stage 2);
 - be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings;
 - seek to involve learners at all times in preparation and leadership.

Organisation

We come together as a school family to worship on a Monday morning and a Friday afternoon. Foundation and Key Stage 1 worship together each Wednesday and Key Stage 2 come together to worship each Wednesday. On Tuesdays and Thursdays collective worship takes place in each class.

Once a term a Joint Key Stage Assembly takes place (ie a KS1 class joins with a KS2 class) which is prepared and led by the children.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collection Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the church's seasons, Religious Education Themes studied, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship
- in consultation with appropriate parties and with reference to school aims and policies
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community
- to develop in learners skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, learner groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of learners' 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 learners and whether learners are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

Resources

Resources are the responsibility of the class teachers. A selection of resources are also housed in each year group and key stage pupils are encouraged to use resources to plan their own class / key stage workshops. Other resources are available in the hall and artefacts of other world faiths (eg Judaism & Islam) are available in the staffroom.

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

When children attend residential visits they are encouraged to enter into short acts of collective worship. Prayer, 'talking to God', and praying according to his will (John 5:14) is a special part of the school family time shared.

Eucharist

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will often be celebrated with all learners. Children who do not receive Eucharist will receive a Blessing from Father. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for learners 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 on Children's Masses"** as a basis for our practice.

We believe that learners 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 the Eucharistic Prayer; and/or the Communion Rite.

The Co-ordinator for Collective Worship

The role of the Leader for Collective Worship includes;

- ❖ Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship.
- ❖ Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship which will form part of the School Improvement Plan.
- ❖ Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of learners.
- ❖ 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 on Children's Masses'.
- ❖ Organising themes for Collective 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.

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.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years.