



Saint GREGORY'S
Bath

Worshipping Together A Policy for Collective Worship

In Christ we flourish

Reviewed Sept 2017

Rationale

Our community exists to lead young people to flourish through Christ. (School Mission Statement and 'A People of Hope' page 3)

A fundamental part of our role as a community is to ensure that all within it develop their personal relationship with God. This can best be achieved by ensuring that our school provides ample opportunities, both formal and informal, for private prayer and for collective worship.

Introduction

Collective worship in a Catholic school is concerned with the revelation of God's presence so that praise, honour and thanksgiving may be given to Him. Collective worship should strengthen this Eucharistic community, which is called together to give witness to Jesus Christ. Collective worship is this community's response to God, who invites us to enter into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a Catholic school we create ways in which all have the opportunity to get closer to God, everything we do should be underpinned by the desire to deepen faith, enable communion and strengthen mission.

Legal Requirements

We embrace the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all students. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all students, or separate acts of worship in school groups). We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said by either the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfill this requirement. The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be considered as part of the RE lesson (for time purposes). In this voluntary aided Catholic School, responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing body after consultation with the Headteacher.

Diocesan Guidelines

We are a part of the wider pastoral mission of the Diocese of Clifton. The vision of Bishop Declan is outlined in 'A People of Hope' through which we are reminded that prayer should be inclusive and that students should be offered opportunities to explore the richness of our spiritual heritage (page 6). In addition to this the Bishop urges Catholic schools to have 'Liturgical celebrations that connect with pupil's lives as well as being faithful to the traditions of the Church' (page 7). A key theme of 'A People of Hope' is the need for Catholic schools to engage with spiritual development and formation; liturgy is one way of promoting spiritual development.

As a Catholic School in the Diocese of Clifton we will use Collective Worship to promote 'Called to be a people of hope' and the Diocesan theme for the year of 'Bringing hope to others'. We use as a guidance for our collective worship a varied calendar of appropriate themes throughout the year.

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 our Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Collective Worship

The aim of Collective Worship in the school is to promote a sacramental vision of life through which we celebrate God's presence in our community. We do this in order to contemplate the mystery of God; to unite our worshipping Eucharistic community and to develop the necessary skills of reverence, contemplation, reflection, interpretation, empathy and meditation. This will enable all to be reflective about their own spirituality, inform their own beliefs and respect the beliefs of others.

Full participation in our faith allows us:

- To grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding;
- To grow in understanding of our living faith tradition;
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ;
- To examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys;
- To develop the skills of prayer.

Implementation

All acts of worship should:

- Give glory and praise to God;
- Be structured to ensure a quality experience for all participants;
- Be kept to the point (and brief wherever possible);
- Be clear in their liturgical focus and varied in their delivery;

Collective worship at St Gregory's is arranged as follows:

The school has a calendar and staff follow the spiritual themes outlined for the week. There is full consideration of the liturgical year, feast days and traditions of the Church, for example the rosary, pilgrimage and Stations of the Cross.

- At the start of each morning of the week the Head teacher and/or senior staff or other assigned staff lead collective worship in the context of an assembly to a year group.
- Tutors are expected to lead prayers with their tutor groups each morning. They have been provided with a copy of 'Praying Each Day' and the YouCat prayer book to help them in this and receive themed resources each week from the Chaplain to assist them in this.
- Teachers are expected to lead students in prayer before lunch and at the end of the day. A handbook of prayers appropriate to praying before lunch is provided to all staff.
- Year 5 & 6 Intake and taster days start with an opportunity for prayer and reflection
- The Chapel is open for personal prayer before exams.
- All students have a Service of Reconciliation in both Advent and Lent and then have the opportunity to go to confession if they wish to.
- Whole School Masses are celebrated at three points throughout the year to fit in with the liturgical and academic calendars of the year.
- In addition to liturgies of reconciliation, whole school liturgies are organised for Advent and Ash Wednesday.
- Holy Days of Obligation, should they occur in term time, are marked with Mass either as a whole school community or voluntary at lunch.

Students are actively encouraged to write their own prayers and prayer intentions. These often form the basis of Masses, liturgies, assemblies or a part of Chaplaincy activities and displayed in the chapel or other prominent places around the school.

- Once a week, during tutor time, an organised period of student led reflective worship takes place. This time of worship is prepared and delivered by students in advance, focusing on the weekly theme and is supported by the school Chaplain.
- Every tutor group lead an assembly to their year group over the course of the year, based on the theme of that particular week.

Chaplaincy Opportunities

The school employs a Lay Chaplain to lead Chaplaincy in the school through positive engagement with students and staff. The Chaplain aims to provide outreach opportunities and encourage active participation in the mission of the Church, ensuring that the experience of faith is all-encompassing and apostolic in nature. In the school Chapel the Chaplain organises prayer and activities for every break and lunch time throughout the week which include, Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, Lectio Divina, meditation and creative workshops. At other times older students are encouraged to be proactive in leading worship, reflection and sessions.

Mass or the Liturgy of the Word with the distribution of the Eucharist, is celebrated in the School chapel weekly and all students are welcome.

The Governing Body is wholly responsible for determining whether the Liturgy of the Word with the distribution of the Eucharist is to be celebrated.

The Governing Body assert the primacy of the Eucharist as being the central liturgical act of our Catholic faith community. However, where appropriate, they have determined that the Liturgy of the Word with the distribution of the Eucharist may be celebrated in the Chapel as part of our voluntary provision. This will not replace the school Masses mentioned above. The same general principles apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as to other acts of school worship and opportunities for students to participate should be maximised.

Collective worship at the New Sixth

The Education Reform Act 1988 clearly states that all students must take part in a daily act of collective worship. This includes those in Years 12 and 13 (the Sixth Form); however, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 allows sixth form students to withdraw themselves from the act of collective worship should they wish to do so.

The New Sixth therefore invites all students to participate in, or respect the desire of others to participate in, a daily reflection, prayer, thought of the day in tutor time. There is a voluntary time of Chaplaincy organised Collective Worship that takes place in The Well once a week.

All assemblies will have prayer as part of it and include within them examples of lives of people of faith and other good human beings, they may mark the celebration of a broad range of religious and cultural festivals that reflect the diversity of faiths, and include a response to key local, national and international events. They are encouraged to be co-ordinated, where possible, with the calendar of themes that are used in the daily worship of St Gregory's.

All students at the New Sixth are invited and warmly welcomed to attend Masses or Liturgies that are taking place within the rest of the school community.

St Gregory's employs a Lay Chaplain to work specifically within the New Sixth and The Well homes the chaplaincy provision. Additionally, there is the presence of a Chaplain from St Mark's who works in collaboration with St Gregory's Chaplain as part of the New Sixth Chaplaincy provision.

The Well seeks to:

- provide opportunities for students to think about their own beliefs, whether religious or otherwise
- consider The Big Questions which don't necessarily have easy / definitive answers
- put faith into action by supporting charities
- providing times for silent reflection / prayer
- celebration of successes of members of the school community
- input from visiting speakers / experts
- It also offers more formal opportunities for collective worship such as morning reflection each week, seasonal celebrations and liturgies, carol services and inter-denominational services.)

Policy Monitoring and Review

In this voluntary aided Catholic School, it is the overall responsibility of governors, in consultation with the Head teacher, to ensure that the legal requirements are met and opportunities for quality collective worship are being delivered. Those responsible will ensure that acts of worship are in accordance with the school's Trust Deed and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

This policy is monitored by the Head of RE and is evaluated and reviewed every two years. Governors review reports on the prayer life of the school on a regular basis. This forms part of the Headteacher's report to governors.

The following will be monitored:

- Time set aside for collective worship;
- Whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy;
- Whether collective worship is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids, etc;
- Staff development on collective worship and its impact;
- Prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing students into prayer;
- Impact on students and members of the school community;
- Opportunities for students to develop the necessary skills to access and lead worship and prayer;
- Records of themes and teachings of the Catholic Church covered in collective Worship.

Observation and monitoring records should be kept and should form part of the self review process. Outcomes of monitoring will be communicated to staff and governors with recommendations for future action.

Right of Withdrawal

Parents have a right in law to remove their child from all or part of the religious education programme or collective worship. While the governors respect this right and will make individual arrangements if necessary, we would strongly discourage parents from considering this option since it runs counter to the mission of the school and its Instrument of Government.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship (Head of RE):

The co-ordinator will be responsible for:

- Formulating a written policy;
- Ensuring that collective worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of students;
- Ensuring that collective worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the Catholic teachings;
- Assisting the governors and Headteacher in carrying out their legal responsibilities with regard to collective worship.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to:

- All members of the school community;
- New members of staff and will form part of their induction;
- New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards collective worship

This policy should be read in conjunction with Governors Policies on:

- Behaviour for Excellence
- Mission Statement/School Creed

Definitions

Liturgy

Liturgy literally means 'work of the people' and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is the formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action.

Prayer

Prayer may be an individual experience or, if it is an activity with others, may form part of an act of worship. One of the early fathers of the Church described prayer as "the raising of one's mind and heart to God or requesting of good things from God." These words of St John Damascene, now found in the catechism, illustrate why we begin and end each day with a prayer.¹

Collective Worship

Collective worship is concerned with giving glory, honour and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Worship is at the very heart of our school and must reflect something special or separate from ordinary School activities.

Prayer Experiences

Students are introduced to a variety of forms and styles of prayer, which are developed in ways which are appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Type:	Example:
Praying the psalms	<i>'I thank you for the wonder of my being' [Psalm139]</i>
Traditional prayers	<i>Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary</i>
Repetitive prayer [mantra]	<i>'Jesus, I love you', repeated several times, slowly</i>
Meditation	<i>Scripture reflection with use of imagination</i>
Bodily prayer	<i>Raising hands in praise, bowing, dancing, genuflecting</i>
Prayer of the heart	<i>Stillness to listen to God: 'Be still and know that I am God.'</i>
Contemplation	<i>Looking at trees, a sunset, an icon, work done in the topic</i>
Gestures	<i>The sign of the cross, the sign of peace</i>
Hymns	<i>Traditional and modern hymns</i>
Music	<i>Listening to quiet, reflective music</i>
Litanies	<i>For all creation: Thanks be to God</i>
Processions	<i>Gospel procession with sung 'alleluia'</i>
Prayer services and liturgies	<i>Formal and spontaneous prayer using holy water, candles, incense and other symbols</i>
Celebrations	<i>Prayer, song, sharing food and drink, celebrating work done</i>

Basic structure of a non-Eucharistic Liturgy

A liturgy works best when it has a simple structure.

Before you begin

Environment

How can we transform a space which might also be used for school dinners and Drama into a sacred space for worship?

Use colours, symbols and decorations appropriate to the liturgical season.

Consider how all the senses can be involved – as members of the assembly approach (*the space*), as they gather, and during the liturgy, what will they:

See (actions, gestures, symbols, decorations)

Hear (readings, prayers, music, other sounds, silence),

Smell (incense, perfumed oil),

Touch (symbols, actions, gestures)?

It may not be possible, or desirable, to exploit all of these in every liturgy.

Beware of overkill! The environment should enhance the liturgical action, not distract from it.

The liturgy itself

Gathering

Setting the scene and mood for the celebration.

Gathering people from their different situations and helping to prepare them to celebrate as one worshipping community.

Word of God

This is the most important part of the liturgy.

Everything else should flow from it and be guided by it.

Where will the book of the Word be as people gather?

How do we welcome the Word and give it honour?

Do we process the book from which the Word will be proclaimed? Do we process with it?

(If we have a typed copy of the reading, it should be given dignity and enclosed within a suitably substantial cover.)

What happens to the book of the Word after it has been proclaimed?

Responding to God's Word

Consider the most appropriate response for the Word and season, for example:

Music (a Psalm or other song),

Symbolic action (ritual gesture, movement [e.g. procession], veneration, etc.)

Silence, contemplation

Prayer (silent, spoken by individual/group(s)/all, sung, chanted, litany form, etc.)

A closing prayer will normally come at the very end of the "Responding" section.

Going forth

How do we 'get out' of the celebration? (Music, movement, dispersal...)

How will the spirit of the celebration continue in the time that follows?

Appendix 4

Collective worship in our school usually follows the pattern or variation of the pattern detailed below:²⁻

- **Gathering** - how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/ reflective music, lighted candles, statues, sign of the cross, focus and examination of conscience etc);
- **Word** - a reading from the Scriptures (or another suitable source), breaking the word, time to reflect on this and prayers to fit into the theme;
- **Action** - a ritual movement that everyone can join in with that fits with the theme (gestures such as shaking hands, holding hands, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc);
- **Mission** - the sending out from the celebration, giving the children something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.