



***Jesus is the centre of our lives,
our learning and friendships,
in a safe, happy, caring community
where all are welcome.***

PRAYER AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

Person Responsible:	RE Co-ordinator/H/T/DHT
Date policy reviewed:	September 2025
Reviewed by:	Teaching staff, Head Teacher, Governors
Date of next Review:	September 2027

The Nature of Prayer and Collective Worship at Holy Cross

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.

'The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.' *Christ at the centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005*

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. (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.

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 will 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, within Come and See RE curriculum. Collective Worship at Holy Cross is an important part of its Catholic distinctive ethos.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy

Worship in **Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy** is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Collective worship considers 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; T
- Those from other faith backgrounds

The Aims of Collective Worship

Collective Worship in Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using 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.'

Principles

All acts of worship in Holy Cross Catholic Primary Academy will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead worship;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.¹ Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

Full participation in our faith will allow 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.
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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;

Planning, content and celebration

Collective Worship is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, British Values and Protective Characteristics.

The parish and parents are invited to participate in celebrations such as an end of school year mass, the Rosary in October and May and school assemblies.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

We have formal prayers taught to all the children including the Our Father and Hail Mary. The children are encouraged to participate in spontaneous prayer within their own class on a daily basis as well as in collective worship.

As part of Collective worships, children are taught the responses in mass and learn for examples different 'Alleluias' all of which children choose which they would like to sing.

Liturgical Assemblies – Collective Worship

Assemblies are important regular occasions when we reinforce the sense of being a community centred on Christ.

Structure of our Collective Worship:

1. Gathering - welcome
2. The Word - readings from Scripture
3. Reflection - responding to the Word of God, intercessions
4. Moving on - sending forth

1. Gathering – welcome

When we gather during Collective Worship, at St. Anne's, we believe the atmosphere is important so staff and children arrive silently and listen to music. The music is a mixture of hymns from around the world to prepare pupils to listen to the Word of God. Teachers should see themselves as responsible for the behaviour of their class as they enter a Collective Worship. Pupils should enter in an orderly and appropriate way.

2. The Word - readings from Scripture

Collective Worship Theme

The starting point for a whole school Collective Worship (Tuesday) should be the Scripture readings from the previous Sunday. This will enable all the children at St. Anne's to experience the Christian feast of Sunday. The other Collective Worship's in the week will follow themes, for example: British values, our school values and protective characteristics, all linking to our beliefs and scripture readings.

3. Reflection - responding to the Word of God

At this point, the response to Scripture can be original and stimulating, for example drama, art (visual focus), mime, songs, quiet reflection, prayer and music. Collective worship offers regular opportunities for community song and gathering together.

Collective Worship is the key time when the community prays together. The whole Collective Worship should be seen as prayer.

4. Moving on - sending forth

Whatever Collective Worship theme is developed, there should be some aspect that enables students and staff to link it to their lives and invite them to respond. This can be quite simple such as asking a question or more elaborate in terms of giving detailed examples. For instances, an assembly based from Mark 4:30-32 (The parable of the mustard seed) might elaborate on how pupils could act on something/start something small which could make a huge difference.

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

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 in this Catholic school we begin and end each session with a prayer.

Collective Worship

Collective worship is our loving response, in word and action, to God’s invitation to enter into a relationship with Godself, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and witness of the Holy Spirit.

Policy Monitoring and Review

In this Catholic school, it is the overall responsibility of governors, in consultation with the headteacher, 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 R.E. co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff every two years. Governors should review reports on the prayer life of the school on a termly basis. This will form 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 pupils into prayer;
- Impact on pupils and members of the school community;
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access 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 selfreview process.

Outcomes of monitoring will be communicated to staff and governors with recommendations for future action.

Right of Withdrawal:

Parents reserve the right to remove their child/ren from acts of collective worship.

The Role of the RE Lead:

The co-ordinator will be responsible for:-

- Formulating a written policy;
- Ensuring there is a development plan for collective worship;
- 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 Catholic teachings;
- Organising themes for worship in consultation with staff
- Assisting the governors in carrying out their legal responsibilities with regard to collective worship.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to:

- All members of the school community;
- Parish priests or members of pastoral areas as appropriate;
- New members of staff and will form part of their induction;
- New parents, to promote positive attitudes towards collective worship

Policy review date September 2027