



St Thomas of Canterbury

Collective Worship Policy

The Nature of Collective Worship.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school 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.

Legal Requirement

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. The act of worship is not designated curriculum time and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

The Place of Prayer and Worship in the Life of our School

Prayer, worship and liturgy are at the heart of our Catholic school and are integral to the ethos, mission and distinctiveness of our Catholic school community.

We believe that prayer and 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.
- Prayer and worship will be an experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

The Role of the Teacher

We believe that leading pupils in prayer is a vital and essential part of Catholic education. It is expected that teachers will:

- Provide opportunities for pupils to pray
- Provide pupils with meaningful prayer experiences
- Assist pupils to develop the language of prayer

- Teach pupils the traditional prayers of the Church
- Help pupils to develop habits of prayer.

The Aims of Prayer and Worship

We believe that prayer and 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 develop a language of prayer
- To experience a sense of belonging to a community
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To learn prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with', and 'to give worth to'.

All acts of prayer and worship in our school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its catholic character
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, ability and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for and develop their capacity to take part in the liturgical life of the Church.

Organisation of Prayer and Worship at St Thomas of Canterbury:

Collective Worship is planned:

- With a prepared theme with reference to the Church's seasons, "Come and See", significant dates and the curriculum and following a planned structure. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship.
- Through 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 pupils' skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way

What Does Collective Worship Policy Look Like at St Thomas of Canterbury?

Early Years and Years 1-2

- Teacher models and leads;
- At this age, children are facilitating Worship, rather than leading it. They may lead certain elements / parts;
- Reverence for the Word of God in Scripture should be shown and expected from the earliest years.

Years 3-6

- Teachers should be excellent role models in preparing and delivering Collective Worship;
- Teachers and pupils work together at first to prepare Collective Worship. Teachers withdraw support gradually. Pupils take over;
- Teachers direct what happens and withdraw direction gradually. Pupils take over;
- Teachers should provide themes and Scripture and oversee the children's efforts before delivery. Teachers can withdraw this provision if appropriate.

Nursery and Reception

Children may...

- Sing a gather Song;
- Make the Sign of Cross;
- Choose suitable artefacts – given a very limited choice;

- Greet everyone;
- Set up focus table;
- Pass things round;
- Say prayers;
- Say who/what they want to pray for.

Year 1

The same as Nursery and Reception plus...

- Given the theme, choose an appropriate way to Gather / Go forth (– from a limited selection – C.D.);
- Choose suitable artefacts from a less limited selection;
- Teacher-input to help

Year 2

All Y1 plus...

- Can explain the purpose, theme and focus;
- Using the CD resources, can choose a suitable..
- Gather
- Listen
- Respond and Go Forth.

Years 3- 4

All Year 2 plus....

Children may...

- provide a suitable focus without limit of choice. They understand their choice and can make appropriate use of liturgical colours;
- lead singing;
- work I.C.T. equipment etc.;
- write prayers and petitions etc. for inclusion that fit the theme of the Collective Worship;

- make full use of the C.D. to choose suitable ways to Gather, Listen, Respond, Go Forth etc.

Years 5 - 6

All Y3 – 4 plus...

- Given the set theme, pupils can now select appropriate Scripture passages (initially from a limited selection);
- By end of Y6, all elements should be in place. Pupils should be able to develop all parts of Collective Worship independently with understanding when given a theme or a passage from Scripture.

Children Leading:

Some will be more able / willing than others. There should be no coercion, but all children should have the opportunity to prepare / lead Collective Worship if they wish to do so at the teacher's discretion

Evaluations

- *Acts of collective worship (whether they be class based, key stage based, or whole school) will be periodically evaluated based upon direction from the RE leader and Head of School*
- The children will be involved in the evaluation process
- Others should sometimes asked to evaluate in an appropriate manner.
 - What did you enjoy?
 - What would you have done?

* The evaluation document can be found in the RE section of the School Handbook *

Liturgy leaders

2 children from each key stage 2 class form part of our Liturgy Leaders group. This group meets weekly to help prepare whole school liturgies and class liturgies.

Prayer foci and Prayer Leaders

Daily prayers are said at the start/ end of the day and before/ after lunch. All staff are given a booklet of prayers which is regularly updated, to support staff.

Every week each class chooses a Prayer Leader for the week, who chooses and leads the class in prayer at the beginning and end of the day and before lunch.

Each class also has a prayer focus at the front of the class which has prayer vase where children can put their own personal intentions in for the class to pray for.

Whole School Collective Worship

Every Monday the school meets for collective worship based on the Sunday Gospel. The school uses TenTen Theatre group resources to make the liturgy engaging and dynamic. Themes for Collective Worship are organised according to

- The Liturgical Year
- Celebrations of special events in the life of the school
- Events locally, nationally and internationally, where appropriate

Key Stage Assemblies

Every Tuesday and Wednesday each key stage meets together for collective worship. This is led by a teacher with the help of a group of children who will lead the prayers and choose the hymns. These will be linked to the principles of social Catholic teaching, the core values of the school, and the value of the month. Links will be made with the Gospel readings where this is appropriate.

Class Assemblies

During Advent and Lent all Key Stage 2 classes holds an assembly for the rest of the school, staff and parents.

Class liturgies

Each class has a class liturgy at the end of each Come and See Topic which will be led by the children. Each liturgy follows the 'Gather, Listen to the Word, Response, Going Forth' format and so increasing support is given for the older children to plan and lead liturgies in class more.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Children in Year 3 are following the Children of the Eucharist programme where they spend time learning about the Eucharist and then have the opportunity to go into church and experience Adoration. The Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament also takes place on the first Friday of every month.

Church Worship

The school has high levels of visibility from teachers and senior leaders within the parish church, with masses approximately every month taking place either at Our Lady at St Thomas, or in school, lead by Fr Gus the parish priest. Links with the church and parish are also made through:

- Education Sunday masses (yearly)
- Masses to celebrate key feast days
- Christmas Carole performance in church
- Nativity play at Christmas Eve mass
- Easter Passion play

Our parish priest, family members, friends and parishioners are always invited to celebrate with us. At various times outside school hours/ Mass or Prayer services are planned for the whole school/parish community to worship together. Staff are encouraged to attend celebrations related to the Sacramental programmes in the parishes, wherever possible.

Liturgical Calendar

Children learn about the Liturgical life of the church through curriculum R.E, assemblies, involvement in displays and altars, masses and prayer services, power points, bible stories etc. The school newsletter is also colour coded to align with the appropriate colours of the church year.

Parental Involvement

Parents are invited to our class assemblies, productions and celebrations. They are invited to all masses. We encourage them to attend as we believe that this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a demonstration of home and school working together to support the children. Parents are encouraged to join in with all prayers and hymns during assemblies to lead by example in their involvement.

Monitoring Evaluation and Delivery of Collective worship

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

Policy Monitoring and Review This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed and updated every year.

Date approved by the Governing Body: _____

Date for review: October 2018