

St Gregory's RC Primary School A Voluntary Academy



Prayer and Worship Policy

Written: May 2018 by RE Lead
Reviewed: July 2022 by RE Lead
Approved by Governors: October 2022

School Mission Statement

St Gregory's is a sanctuary of love and hope where greatness grows.

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 a relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

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. As a rule, acts of worship will take place on the school premises.

The Place of Collective 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 St Gregory's RC Primary 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.

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.

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.

Those for whom may be their first and only experience of church.

Those from other Christian backgrounds – 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.

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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 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 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 fully.
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms' and 'to give worth to'.

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God.
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.

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
- Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings
- Be well-planned and resourced.

Organisation of Prayer & Worship

Daily Prayers

Prayers are said at a variety of times in the school day. There is:

- A variety of prayers in word and song that are celebrated in worships
- A prayer is said at the start of the school day
- Grace before meals that is said in class
- A prayer at the end of the school day.

Assemblies/Services

- All assemblies begin with an act of worship
- Children celebrate achievements in celebration assemblies
- Hymn practice is held on alternate weeks. This always begins with an act of worship.
- The children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 share a Christmas Nativity with parents.
- Key Stage 2 children share the mystery of Christ's birth through our annual Carol Concert.
- Stations of the Cross are celebrated through a special Stations of the Cross service in school.
- During May, a 'Crowning of Our Lady' service is held in the School Hall

There is always a religious element at the centre of our class assemblies and services in school, placing our faith at the heart of our celebrations.

Prayer Areas

Prayer areas form a spiritual focal point for all classrooms.

- Each class must provide a focal point for prayer, an altar or display which provides a visual stimulus for prayer. Staff should take account of liturgical colours and each altar should have some religious symbols e.g. statues, rosary beads, bible etc...
- There is an altar in the assembly hall which reflects the liturgical calendar.

Worships/Liturgies/ Prayer Services

Worships are held at numerous points throughout the school week in the school hall and in classrooms. These are a special time of prayer and reflection for staff and children. Each week children take part in:

- Whole-school Worship led by the Headteacher
- Phase Worship (EYFS/KS1 and KS2 – held on alternate weeks)
- Singing Worship (held on alternate weeks)
- Child-led Worship

Masses

Whole school Masses are held in school at the beginning and end of the school year. Mass is also held on Holy Days such as Ash Wednesday and All Saints Day.

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 Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- At the start of each half-term by the pupils in line with the school's 'Virtues to Live By' statements.
- Following a structure with reference to the: 'Virtues to Live By', Church's seasons, 'Come and See', significant dates and the curriculum.
- Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship.
- Involving 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 in pupils 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 through:

- Displays, collections of pupils' 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 pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship.

Resources

The school is building up a bank of resources for collective worship. Individual teachers also use their own resources.