



# **Diocese of Leeds**

## **St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School**



### **Collective Worship Policy**

**2023-2024**

# **St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School Collective Worship Policy**

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission statement at St Nicholas Catholic Primary School is embedded by the statement of ethos:

**'Love one Another as I have loved you'**

## **The Nature of Collective Worship**

We believe that Christian worship at St. Nicholas 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.<sup>1</sup>

## **Legal Requirements**

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils which 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. However, the governing body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere e.g. church, "on a special occasion".

At St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 and are explored in greater depth in the guidelines.

## **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 at St. Nicholas is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. It is a daily opportunity (excepting whole school assemblies) where children can express concerns, worries, news or celebrations where these can be held in the presence of God.

## **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 with' and 'to give worth to.'
- to consider the virtues that we all aim to live by and how they can become virtuous members of the community and the wider world.

## **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.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

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 (children's attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life *i.e.*, 5-6 mins. *For Key Stage 1 and 7-10 mins. For Key Stage 2*). *However, we do appreciate that sometime acts of Collective Worship may last longer than this time in instances of bereavements, world events and so on.*
- be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

At St. Nicholas Collective Worship currently takes place at the following times:

- the week begins with a whole school Act of Worship in the Hall (with Reception children joining when appropriate)
- Key Stage 1 worship together once a week
- Key Stage 2 worship together once a week
- On certain occasions such as Harvest, St Nicholas day a whole school Act of worship takes place (which is regularly attended by governors, partners and members of our church community)
- on the other days, Acts of Collective Worship will take place in class groups, usually in classrooms but also in the prayer garden or other areas outside.

Whole School Masses are also celebrated as appropriate. Class masses are also timetabled on a weekly rota and take place in Church.

### **The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship**

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a whole school yearly Liturgical planner which references- the Churches seasons and resources that can be followed. 'The Way, The Truth and The Life', significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in all 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:

- on planning to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

## Structure

Usually, Acts of Collective Worship will take the following structure:

- Acts of Collective Worship follow the structure: Welcome/gather, Word/listen, Worship/pray/respond and Witness/send /go/mission.
- the room or space will be made prayerful and a centrepiece will be created. This centrepiece will include a lighted candle and other religious artefacts, as appropriate, may be added including the words of Scripture, key words etc; See St Nicholas guide to worship.
- often, the children will be gathered and welcomed by meditative music or a hymn;
- the theme of the worship will be explained to the children and they will listen to the word of God through Scripture. The length of the reading will vary depending on the age of the children and the theme etc;
- the children will be asked for their response or be given a simple action to perform (e.g. offering one another the sign of peace; a simple blessing on the hand or forehead etc);
- following this, the children will be given a 'mission' or something they must try to do for that particular day e.g. say something kind to someone who is not your best friend; look for someone at playtime who may not have a friend etc;
- Collective Worship will end by children making the Sign of the Cross.

From the earliest age, children are encouraged to contribute to Collective Worship through the responses they make. This builds up towards the children planning and delivering their own acts of Collective Worship in Key Stage 2.

The expectations for the end of each year group are identified below:

**Foundation Stage:** Throughout the year the children set up the focal point together discussing what they want to include and why as well as the colour of the drape. They are encouraged to share, through prayer, people who they would like to pray for.

**Year One:** The children will begin to be able to explain what the focal point consists of and why. They should continue to suggest people who need our prayers, and this should now be extended to people in and out of school as well as events they may see in the news. They should begin to read and possibly write and share prayers during Collective Worship.

**Year Two:** The children will be encouraged to set up the focal point more independently explaining why they have chosen certain religious artefacts. They should contribute to planning by selecting a suitable hymn from a selection given. The children will be beginning to suggest Scripture readings to share at the major feasts of the year. Children in Year 2 should participate in short reflections about the Word of God therefore laying foundations for explaining the Scripture. Throughout Collective Worship the children may write and share prayers and when appropriate they will be encouraged to write promises for the mission/witness.

**Year Three:** The children should now be independently setting up the focal point selecting relevant items linked to the theme. They will be able to choose hymns from a selection given and will sing with enthusiasm. Throughout the year they will suggest Gospel readings linked to the major feasts and will also start to select Scripture readings (from a selection given) linked to a particular theme. They will continue to participate in short reflections about the Word of God continuing to lay the foundations for explaining the Scripture. The children will contribute by writing prayers, thinking about and sharing how they could go out and spread

the Word of God. Year 3 children will be introduced to planning and will be given the opportunity to plan at least one element of the worship: Welcome, Word, Worship or Witness.

**Year Four:** The children should be given the opportunity to plan Collective Worship for their class using the planning frame shared and will select their own hymns ensuring that they link to the theme of the Worship. Explaining the Word should be attempted but at this stage may still require the guidance of the teacher. Children in year 4, should be given the chance to select a theme and locate a relevant piece of Scripture.

**Year Five:** The majority of children should be independently planning and leading Collective Worship for their own class by the end of year 5. They should be able to select a theme, relevant scripture, explain the scripture with the support of the teacher, and then lead their peers in a reflection. Some children may be confident enough to lead Collective Worship in other classes within Key Stage 2.

**Year Six:** Children should be independently planning and leading Collective Worship for their own class and others within the school. They should be given opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship for a Key Stage and the whole school including parents and Governors. Opportunities for voluntary worship should be identified and the children should plan and lead this completely independently. Acts of Worship could be planned linked to special events such as Saint Days, theme weeks, links to natural disasters and so on.

There is a children's guide which includes a planning sheet to assist.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

At least once a year our 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. Regular evaluations will also take place and will be recorded on the worship plans.

### **Resources**

Each class and key stage have a selection of resources available to them in a class worship box. Other centralised resources are available.

### **Voluntary Worship and Retreats**

Many additional worship opportunities are held throughout the year these are usually linked to the liturgical calendar or in response to local and global issues. These could include: Harvest Celebrations, Christmas, Lenten Liturgies, Marian Services and so on. The children and members of the school community are invited to take part in voluntary worship particularly in times such as November and praying the rosary..

### **Eucharist**

Eucharistic celebrations in school/Church will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage. The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for children 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 for Masses with Children’*** as a basis for our practice.

We believe that children are best introduced to prayer, the sacraments and particularly the Eucharist in a step by step approach.

In school, therefore, the **‘Liturgy of the Word’**, rather than the Eucharist will be the norm.

### **The Co-ordinator for Collective Worship**

At St. Nicholas, the co-ordination of Collective Worship is led by Jane Burns but is supported by members of the SLT.

### **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. The Foundation Governors, in particular, will play a most important role.

## Appendix 1

### **The Role of the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship**

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Collective Worship which may at times form part of the school development plan
- 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 principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for 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
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in 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

*[Consideration should be given to the establishment of a planning group, which might include, the co-ordinator, the headteacher, deputy, staff, pupils, governors and school chaplain. It would be part of the role of the co-ordinator to lead this group.]*

## Appendix 2

### **Diocesan Statement on Collective Worship**

It is the responsibility of every catholic school to provide for all its members a vital experience of liturgy, worship and prayer which:

- names and celebrates God present and active in authentic human experience
- is educative
- is within our Catholic tradition

The purpose of these experiences is:

- to give honour and praise to God
- to develop the school as a community of faith
- to assist pupils in developing their relationship with God, creation and the community of the Church
- to witness to the community and the wider world

Collective worship in our schools will be:

- properly planned
- adequately resourced
- recorded
- monitored
- evaluated

in order to ensure that the collective worship experienced within the school is a relevant, meaningful and positive contribution to the religious, spiritual and moral development of all members of the community.