

The Federation of St Mary's Catholic Schools



Collective Worship

Agreed:	Autumn 2022
To be reviewed:	Autumn 2023

What Collective Worship is

At St Mary's, we believe that God is present and active in all authentic human experience. We already have a graced life and worship is naming and celebrating this reality in the Christian tradition. God is reached through the world and adored within it. Creating a sacred space for worship is to create a space where the unity of God and creation is reverently symbolised and celebrated. Worship and the words and rituals we use should not sever us from the ordinary circumstances of our lives but rather unite us more closely to them.

- Worship remembers and celebrates the marvellous things God works in our lives. It celebrates God's presence in our lives. Worship should not feel like an interruption from a different world. It is a spontaneous response to life.
- Collective Worship 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.
- Worship is at the very heart of our school and reflects something special or separate from ordinary school activities.

Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others may form part of an act of worship.

All liturgies involve the praise, thanksgiving and adoration of God and are, therefore, acts of worship. However, not all worship will be liturgy as it may or may not include symbol and action.

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 reflect on personal issues
- 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.'

Principles of Collective Worship

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
- Develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a taken way
- 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. In order to do this celebrations will:
 - Be short and appropriately pace, one minute for each year of child's age as a guideline, i.e. KS1 5-6 minutes, KS2 7-10 minutes.
 - Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Collective Worship at St Mary's:

At St Mary's, there are many opportunities for worship in different forms.

Time and space are set aside to:

- wonder at
- contemplate
- mark as special
- come to terms with
- give worth to the mystery of life – faith they have explored
- grow in awareness of and actively respond to the spiritual dimension of life
- develop the capacities and skills to participate in and plan worship and celebrations

Each day opportunities are taken for collective worship in all classes. This will include the use of formal and informal prayer. The collective worship at St Mary's follows the liturgical year. The scripture used reflects that used during Mass on the previous Sunday.

Class teachers will plan worship based on the scripture and targeted at an appropriate level for the age of the children. Children begin to lead collective worship in class and are given the necessary support to help plan for their class.

here is opportunity for worship based on current events or relevant needs of the class. Within Infant and Junior assemblies, which occur once a week, time is dedicated to collective worship in the form of prayer, song and reflection. This allows children to engage with worship at an age-appropriate level and to celebrate with their peers.

The whole school community gathers weekly to worship and to celebrate the major festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Holy Week. Members of the wider community are regularly invited to join with us in worship and celebration.

There are regular opportunities for parents and families to join in worship. This takes place in 'stay and pray' sessions which occur throughout the year.

*Refer to the Archdiocese Collective Worship 'Guidance for schools' and 'Come and See' pages 28 – 32 for further guidance.