

DIOCESE OF LEEDS

GUIDELINES

ON NURTURING

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN

A CATHOLIC SECONDARY

SCHOOL

GUIDELINES ON NURTURING COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IN A CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

DEFINITIONS and DISTINCTIONS

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 the term used in legislation in this country but it is not a phrase we would readily use in a Catholic context. “Prayer” and “liturgy” are terms with which we are more familiar.

Prayer

*“Prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours.
God thirsts that may thirst for him”*

(CCC 2560)

*“Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look
turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and
of love, embracing both trial and joy.”*

(Therese of Lisieux)

One of the Early Fathers of the Church described prayer as “... the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” These words of St John Damascene have become a classical definition of prayer and they point to the reason why, in a Catholic school, we begin and end each session of the day in prayer. Prayer can be of different types and express different things. The Catechism of the Catholic Church identifies the following forms of prayer:

- Blessing and Adoration – the prayer which blesses God for the goodness which has been shown to humankind
 - Petition – the prayer which asks for forgiveness and which calls for the establishment of the Kingdom of God
 - Intercession – consists in asking on behalf of another
 - Thanksgiving – acknowledging the gifts which God has given
 - Praise – the prayer which praises God simply because God is
- (CCC 2623 –2649)*

A simple way to remember this is through the old acronym of A.C.T.S. The letters stand for adoration, contrition, thanksgiving and supplication.

Liturgy

The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows

(This is the Liturgy 10)

“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.

*The ‘Liturgy of the Word with Children. Guidelines’ (1996 The Bishop’s Conference of England and Wales) lists the **General Principles of Liturgy**:*

- Liturgy is the praise and worship of God.
- Liturgy is the source and summit of the Church’s life and our lives.
- It is the right and duty of all baptised, both children and adults.
- The function of the liturgy is to build up members of Christ’s body, to strengthen us in preaching Christ.
- Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the whole person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.
- Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying.
- In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.
- The purpose of adapting liturgy for children is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the liturgy of the parish.
- Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity.

(See Appendix 1 for a simple liturgical format)

Collective Worship

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 a relationship with Godself, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Worship will be at the very heart of every Catholic school and must reflect 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.

An assembly is any experience of gathering/assembling in school. It may include an act of worship but the difference between worship and assembly must always be clear.

PRINCIPLES

The following key principles have been developed to support school communities when devising or revising policy and practice related to Collective Worship.

Principle I

Every effort will be made to give pupils positive experiences, based on sound educational, pastoral and liturgical principles.

One of the most important tasks of Catholic schools is to lead pupils, through celebrating liturgies, towards an understanding and appreciation of prayer and the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist.

This is no easy task, given that so many pupils in our schools have little or no experience of celebrating sacraments in their parish communities.

For this reason suggestions on how we can implement this principle can be found in *A Model Policy for Collective Worship* produced by the diocese:

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 in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Principle II

Acts of Worship will prepare pupils for the liturgical life of the Church.

The school has great scope and opportunity through its daily act of worship to provide the steps needed in preparing and developing pupils for the liturgical life of the church. Celebrations of various kinds which help pupils to understand some of the elements of liturgy (such as greeting, silence, community praise) have a great part to play in their liturgical formation. They are part and parcel of school acts of worship. Such experiences help pupils' spiritual development and may eventually lead them to a desire to celebrate Mass and the sacraments beyond the community of the school.

Principle III

Acts of Worship will take into account, as far as possible, the age, aptitudes and backgrounds of the pupils.

Pupils are best introduced to prayer and liturgy in a developmental, step by step approach. Asking them to pray in a way they are not capable of, or in a manner beyond their years, can inhibit and sometimes damage development in this area. For liturgy to be effective we need to take into account the age, aptitudes and backgrounds of the pupils. Guidance on this can again be found in the model policy:

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.
- be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Principle IV

Eucharistic celebrations will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with those pupils whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage.

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.

Principle V

Acts of Collective Worship will usually follow the basic structure of Christian worship.

The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as to other acts of school worship and opportunities for pupils to participate will be maximised.

The principles expressed here lead us to conclude that in school the ‘Liturgy of the Word’ rather than the Eucharist will be the norm. Practical guidance is to be found in the model policy.

In planning the celebration of the Eucharist with a school group sensitivity needs to be given to the number of pupils who come from other denominations, other faith traditions, or from no particular faith background at all. The Eucharist is the central liturgical act of a Catholic faith community, so if there is a large proportion of people who are unable to participate fully in

such a celebration it would be appropriate to think through how frequently and in what manner such celebrations should take place.

In secondary schools worship includes:

- short, simple liturgies and prayer times
- the occasional celebration of sacramental liturgies
- a range of types of prayer
- a range of styles of celebration
- opportunities for pupils to take an active part in worship
- opportunities for pupils to talk leadership roles in worship

APPENDIX 1

For the sake of simplicity we can divide liturgy preparation into four parts:

- **Gathering** – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/reflective music, lighted candles, statues, etc.)
- **Word** – a reading from the Scriptures, breaking the Word, time to reflect on this, and prayers to fit in with the theme.
- **Action** – a ritual or movement in which everyone can join that fits the theme (gestures such as: shaking hands, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc.)
- **Mission** – the sending out from the celebration giving the pupils something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

A Model Policy for Collective Worship

You are offered this model for your consideration. Please discuss and adapt the document according to your own circumstances.

Mission Statement

(Insert the School Mission Statement)

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 a relationship with Godself, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.¹

Legal Requirements.

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils.² (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.

In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Collective Worship rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the head teacher.

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:

¹ 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.

² 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 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 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 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 learn 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 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 pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for and develop their capacity to take part in the liturgical life of the Church.³ 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 (pupils’ attention span lasts in any one activity for an average of one minute per year of life);

³ Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

- be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

(Please state here how Collective Worship is organised in your school)

Length, time of day, weekly pattern, pupil groupings, venues etc. You may wish to include your annual liturgy schedule.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, the Religious Education Curriculum, 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:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- 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

(Please insert here what resources are available and where are they kept.)

Voluntary Worship and Retreats

(e.g. voluntary mass, services at particular seasons of the Church's year e.g. Advent, Lent)

(Insert)

Eucharist

The same general principles will apply to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of school worship, therefore opportunities for pupils to participate will be maximised. When preparing these celebrations reference will be made to '**Directory for Masses with Children**' as a basis for our practice.

The Co-ordinator(s) for Collective Worship

(Insert the name of the co-ordinator(s) or group with a defined role and responsibility. A model job description is also included in Appendix 1.)

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.

The Role of the Governing Body Regarding Collective Worship

Governors should be aware of their legal responsibilities in regard to Collective Worship taking account of the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1988, Education Act 1996 and the School Standard Framework Act 1998.

The Legal Framework

- There must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can either be a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in different school groups (e.g. tutor or form groups, year groups.)

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship and this must be made clear in the policy statement on Collective Worship and in the school prospectus. However, a Catholic school may make it clear to parents that worship is central to the life of a Catholic school and spontaneous acts of worship may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

- The governing body makes arrangements for Collective Worship in a Voluntary School after consultation with the head teacher. The head teacher is responsible for ensuring requirements are met.
- In a Catholic Voluntary Aided School, governors must also take account of the School Trust Deed which states that acts of worship shall be consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.
- Foundation governors have particular responsibility for seeing, so far as is practicable, that the Catholic character of the school is reflected in Collective Acts of Worship. Governors should also be familiar with any guidelines issued by the diocese.
- While the Section 10 OFSTED inspection team is required to report on whether the school fulfils its statutory responsibility for collective worship, the content of Collective Worship will be inspected by the Section 23 Inspector.
- The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and should not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum. It must be distinctive and be able to be identified as such if it is to meet legal requirements.
- 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. a church, "on a special occasion".

Other Responsibilities

- Governors should be familiar with all documentation regarding Collective Worship issued on their behalf and may be actively involved in the process of Collective Worship development in the school.
- Governors should ensure that there is a development plan for Collective Worship, which is appropriately reviewed as part of the whole school development plan.

Policy for Collective Worship

The diocese has provided a model policy for Collective Worship which governors are encouraged to consider. Any policy should include the following:

- The School Mission Statement.
- A definition or description of the nature of Collective Worship.
- The place of worship in the life of the school.
- The aims of Collective Worship.
- The principles of Collective Worship.
- The organisation of Collective Worship (pupil groupings weekly pattern, venues etc.)
- The planning, content and delivery of Collective Worship.
- The recording, monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship.
- Resources available for Collective Worship.
- Voluntary worship and retreats.
- Guidelines regarding the celebration of the Eucharist.
- The management of Collective Worship (who is responsible and areas of responsibility).
- The rights of withdrawal.
- Policy monitoring and review.

Monitoring and evaluation

In Voluntary Aided Schools it is the overall responsibility of the governors, in consultation with the head teacher, to ensure that legal requirements are met and that opportunities for quality Collective Worship are being offered. This may be delegated to the head teacher or the Co-ordinator for Collective Worship. Those responsible will ensure that the acts of worship are in accordance with the School's Trust Deed and consistent with the rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

In order to ensure that effective monitoring of Collective Worship takes place the following questions need to be addressed:

- Is the monitoring of Collective Worship part of the school development plan?

- Is the monitoring/improvement of Collective Worship of importance to the governing body and therefore an item on the agenda?
- How will the monitoring process be used to further develop Collective Worship?

What is to be monitored?

The school may have a document on curriculum monitoring which could be appropriately adapted for Collective Worship. In the absence of such a document the following may be considered:

- Is sufficient time set aside to ensure that monitoring can take place? This may include observations of collective acts of worship, discussions with those who lead worship, discussions with those who experience worship (e.g. pupils, staff, parents, governors and other members of the school community).
- Is the observed practice of Collective Worship consistent with policy?
- Is Collective Worship adequately resourced in terms of leaders, materials, visual aids etc.?
- Is there a record of, or requirement for, staff development and in-service training?
- Are the various environments and groupings for Collective Worship maximising opportunities for worship?

A school audit for Collective Worship is also provided. This may assist governors as well as the Collective Worship co-ordinator to monitor Collective Worship in the school.

Evaluation

Once the monitoring of Collective Worship, as described above and/or in the school audit, has been completed, it will naturally lead to an evaluation of the current position and plans for the development of Collective Worship within the school.

THE COLLECTIVE ACT OF WORSHIP NOTES FOR FORM TUTORS

THE FORM TUTOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

The Form Tutor has the responsibility to ensure, if there is no Year Group or Whole School Collective Act of Worship scheduled, that:

- a Collective Act of Worship takes each day with an adequate time allocation
- the Collective Act of Worship is conducted according to the beliefs, rites and practices of the Roman Catholic Church
- the Collective Act of Worship fulfils the aims identified in the school's policy
- a quality experience which is relevant and educational,
- develops the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the Catholic community worships and so celebrates what it believes to be important in life
- allows the pupils opportunities for reflection
- gives pupils a range of experience which will develop their understanding of the purposes and styles of prayer and worship which are part of the Catholic tradition

The Form Tutor is not necessarily required to lead the Collective Act of Worship but is required to ensure that it takes place.