

St. Mary's College Preparatory School

'Fidem Vita Fateri'

St. Mary's College Preparatory School



**'SHOWING OUR FAITH BY THE WAY
WE LIVE, LOVE AND LEARN'**

**RE
Collective Worship Policy**

October 2022

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Collective Worship Policy

Introduction to Collective Worship at St. Mary's Prep

Collective Worship in a Catholic school is concerned with the revelation of God's presence so that praise, honour and thanksgiving may be given to Him. Collective Worship should strengthen this Eucharistic community, which is called together to give witness to Jesus Christ. Collective Worship is this community's response to God, which invites us to enter into a loving relationship with Him, made possible by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of St. Mary's Prep

St. Mary's College Preparatory School aims to make the school a place where the Gospel values of our Lord Jesus Christ are taught, lived and experienced, where prayer and celebrations are integral to life and where religious growth and development are stimulated within the total curriculum to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

To achieve this aim the school will:

Take into account the religious and educational needs of all who participate

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in church.
- Those for who school may be their first and only experience of church.
- Those from other Christian traditions.
- 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. Mary's Prep is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. It will be related to the 'day to day life, aspirations, and concerns of the school.' (Education Reform Act 1988)

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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 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 Worship in this school will:

- Give glory 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 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 minutes for key stage one, 7-10 minutes for key stage 2.)
- Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

Class Based Acts of Collective Worship

- Teachers organise, plan and prepare other acts of worship, such as simple prayer services that are appropriate to the spiritual life of the class. These may incorporate music, drama, mime, reflection, meditation and litanies. Wherever possible this should be planned with the children's involvement.

All Acts of Worship at St. Mary's Prep follow the "Emmaus Prayer" structure outlined below:

- Gather
- Listen
- Respond
- Go Forth

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Organisation of Collective Worship

Setting the Atmosphere and Preparing for Worship:

Is there a plan available with content to meet the needs of all present?

Is there an appropriate focus?

Are the resources used suitable? Are ICT/music etc. prepared and ready?

Do all the readers/leaders have all they need? Have all support staff been briefed?

Have invitations been sent to members of the community (if appropriate)?

Is the accommodation suitable and ready?

Gathering:

How do participants gather – is there a sense of order and respect? Is there a procession/movement to another area?

How is a prayerful atmosphere created? Is there an invitation to participate? Does everyone feel welcome?

Is the purpose of the act of worship clear and the focus explained?

Listening:

Is the Scripture they are listening to suitable? Is the Word treated with reverence?

Has/have the reader(s) been well-prepared so as to engage the listener?

How is the 'reading' shared – role play, music, power-point etc.? Is it suitable for the participants?

Do participants listen attentively? Do they show good listening skills?

Responding:

Is there maximum participation? Is time given for individual silent reflection?

Do children pray/respond wholeheartedly? Are adults good role models? Do all adults present participate?

Are participants invited to respond in an appropriate manner? (in a variety of ways?)

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Going Forth:

Does Collective Worship conclude appropriately? Do participants leave Collective Worship in a suitable, orderly manner?

How are they enabled to take the message away with them?

Overall:

Was it a positive, enriching religious experience for all present?

Has this worship enhanced the spiritual and/or moral development of those present?

Was the time and content appropriate for the age, ability and background of the children?

Did all parts of worship help to develop the Liturgical formation of participants?

Was it well-organised, led and presented?

Was there a sense of community, common ethos and shared values?

Gather

This movement of prayer calls the group to prayer and reminds them to be aware of God's presence and their relationship to God and each other. We always begin with the Sign of the Cross.

Worship and Assemblies

Assemblies are held on a Monday morning. In Another Place come in and deliver a different Bible story each week told through drama and song.

Friday Morning we hold our 'Star of the Week' assembly. It is an opportunity to celebrate pupils who contribute to the achievements of the school by congratulating children, awarding Star of the Week certificates, Musician and Sports Person of the Week awards too. Any moral and social issues are also addressed in this assembly. Within each assembly there is a clear distinction made between worship and practical aspects of the assembly.

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Masses

The children at The Prep participate in celebrating Mass throughout each term. The RE Co-ordinator and Music teacher prepare the mass, with the support from the parish priest. The children take an active part in the mass. Mass is also celebrated by the whole school on significant feast days, where sometimes we join with the College pupils. The RE Co-ordinator and Music teacher plan readings such as Prayers of the Faithful and hymns for this mass, which are delivered by children and staff.

Class Worship

On those days when pupils do not have an assembly the class teacher leads a daily act of worship based on the theme for the week. This act of worship takes place for approximately the number of minutes equivalent to age (e.g. 6 year olds = 6 minutes) at a time appropriate for each class. These times are not prescriptive across year groups or Key Stages.

Weekly themes

At the start of each year a plan of themes for the year are established. These themes link with the liturgical year of the church and explore major Gospel and life themes, festivals, beliefs and charity events. It should be noted that there will be times when the theme is wholly inappropriate - times of celebration or of disaster or tragedy should be explored in worship as they arise.

At St. Mary's Prep, Collective Worship provides a variety of experiences

- Can be led by pupils or staff visitors. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the planning and delivery of acts of worship both in assemblies, in the Rejoice section of Come and See and in class groups.
- Can be offered as a class or phase group, year or whole school.
- Provide a focus using artefacts, candles, symbols, music, pictures and create the appropriate atmosphere.
- Encourage appropriate entrance and exit to gatherings.
- Ensure the theme, focus delivery, length and resources are appropriate to the age and actively encourage all to participate.

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- Welcome the clergy and those with other ministries, into school, work closely with them, particularly at times of shared preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist and celebrations.
- Work constantly with the parents and the parishes to build up effective formal and informal links between home, parish and school.

Whole School Celebrations

Dates, times and activities for whole school Collective Worship is planned and delivered through consultation with the parish priest.

Planning of Worship:

- To be planned with references to Church's seasons, significant dates, Come And See topics and current happenings.
- Planned in consultation with colleagues, RE co- coordinator and references to school aims and policies.

Evaluated and Monitored

- By Coordinator and children this is ongoing.
- Throughout the school calendar actively seeking variety of Collective Worship experiences.

Recorded

- Through displays collections of pupils contributions, photographs, videos and prayers.
- Keep record of themes and groupings.
- Planning is kept as appropriate.

Resources

Each class teacher is provided with a copy of 'God's Story Revised Edition' and Church's Story Revised Edition. In addition there is a collection of stories, readings and prayers that will be a source of ideas for class teachers. There is a central RE resource cupboard for additional resources and there is an RE section in our school library.

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Prayer Table

A special area is set-aside in each classroom. A prayer table or prayer area is intended to act as a focus for pupils during times of worship. A special focus may be displayed for the week's theme, or a crucifix, candle or other artefact may be used as a centre object during prayer.

Liturgy

Eucharistic celebrations in school will highlight a special occasion and will normally be celebrated with children whose faith development has reached an appropriate stage or be differentiated appropriately so that all ages and abilities can be included. The same general principles will be applied to planning a Eucharistic celebration as other acts of worship, therefore opportunities for children to participate will be maximised. The Parish Priest will lead mass at church and will lead Eucharistic services in school – these dates will be confirmed in advance.

The Co-ordinator of Collective Worship

Collective Worship at St. Mary's Prep is co-ordinated by the Religious Education Coordinator, Miss Paula Walton.

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 religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory of Masses for Children' and Revised Roman Missal.
- Organising themes for Collective Worship.
- Assisting the governors and Headmaster in carrying out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship.

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Planning, Recording, Monitoring and Evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation.
- Monitoring acts of Collective Worship as required.
- Informing the Headmaster 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 Headmaster regarding matters of concern and development.
- Acting as a consultant to colleagues.
- Encouraging positive attitudes to Collective Worship.
- Informing newly qualified and newly appointed colleagues of school policy in regard to Collective Worship.
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community.
- Liaising with parish clergy.
- Liaising with Archdiocesan Education team.

Professional Development / Ongoing Formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship.
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and feeding back.
- Seek and provide training opportunities for the development of other staff members.

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Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Religious Education Lead and reviewed by the whole school staff on a yearly basis. Governors review reports on all the aspects of Religious Education. This will form part of the Headmaster's termly Report to Governors.

Conclusion

Prayer and Worship are central to Christian life. Through clear aims and principles, and a shared vision and strategy, we hope to provide pupils with experiences of Collective Worship that are relevant, appropriate and life giving.

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