

Collective Worship Policy



St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Our Mission Statement:

To love, serve and learn as Jesus Shows Us

DOCUMENT STATUS

Last reviewed	Approved by Governors:	Date of next review:
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Aims and Purpose

At St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School, all children will be introduced to the worship of God and the Liturgy of His Word on an increasing scale as the children progress through the school. We will build upon the children's previous experiences with the Catholic Spirit of the School Mission Statement as the focal point. The staff and Governors should recognise that each child will have a different background with regards to the worship of God.

The aims and purpose of the Collective Worship at St Vincent's are:

- to provide an opportunity for the children to worship God in an atmosphere of joy, happiness and friendliness;
- to enable children to consider spiritual and moral issues;
- to develop the capacity to listen, to forgive and to ask forgiveness;
- to encourage participation and response;
- to express gratitude;
- to act together as a Christian community;
- to promote a common ethos with shared values such as respect for others, truth, forgiveness and justice;
- to reinforce positive attitudes;
- to teach children how to worship and how to lead worship.

What is Collective Worship?

We understand worship as a special act or occasion whose purpose is to show honour, glory and reverence to God. Collective worship may involve all members of the school, children from a Key Stage or a class coming together and participating in an act of worship.

In line with the 1988 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we base our acts of worship on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Catholic Church. However, we conduct our acts of worship in a manner that is sensitive to all religious and educational needs of those 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
- Those from other faith backgrounds
- Those who have no faith

While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the wider community. Worship in a Catholic School is more than just a legal requirement. It is central to Catholic education and forms an essential part of a school's overall provision for prayer and worship.

Why do we celebrate Collective Worship?

Collective Worship provides opportunities for pupils and staff to come together to worship God and:

• To reflect on spiritual and moral issues	• To wonder at
• To enrich the religious experience of children and staff	• To contemplate something of the mystery of God
• To reinforce positive attitudes	• To take time out
• To come to terms with	• To build a firm foundation for liturgy
• To reflect on personal belief	• To respond to and celebrate life
• To enable and encourage a sense of belonging	• To encourage a common mission, ethos and shared values
• To mark as special or give worth to	• To develop community spirit

"It is important to ensure that our prayer reflects the essence of our lives: joy and sorrow, a sense of belonging, a feeling of loneliness, celebration and peace, anger and upset" (R.E. The Primary Years).

Throughout the ages of a primary school prayer builds upon the natural spontaneous expression of joy, wonder, awe, concern, thanks, sorrow, sadness, anger, fear, disappointment evoked through children's growing awareness of themselves, others and their world.

Prayer is the natural way of expressing the above through words, song, gesture, movement, dance, art, writing, silence. This is developed through having a "focus of reverence" - a special experience of awareness; learning to be still and quiet. Informal words of prayer arise out of the above, in the children's own simple everyday language. Gradually, formal prayers are introduced either by hearing them said and joining in or learning by heart. With older pupils children can be introduced to traditional meditation techniques..... stilling exercises, use of a mantra, forms of rhythmic prayer etc.

Who participates in Collective Worship?

CHILDREN must have the opportunity to take part in daily Collective Worship and to take an increasing role in planning, preparing and leading an act of worship.

TEACHERS must plan and enable Collective Worship to take place each day.

PARENTS are invited to participate in Collective Worship (but also have the legal right to withdraw their child).

Where and when does Collective Worship take place?

As a rule, all acts of Collective Worship should take place on the school premises. However, on special occasions it might be appropriate to celebrate Collective Worship elsewhere:

Classroom:	"Where two or three meet in my name I am among them"
School Hall:	"With gratitude in your hearts, sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God"
Church:	"Praise God in His holy place"
In the Open:	"Heaven and earth are full of your glory"
Other Venues:	"We praise you Lord and bless you"

Legislation does not require Collective Worship to take place at a specific time.

It need not occur at the beginning of the day but rather at the most appropriate time for the school to ensure that it is a meaningful and prayerful opportunity for all participants. It is important to note that every child must have an opportunity to take part in Collective Worship every day.

At St Vincent's, daily acts of collective worship are organised as follows to provide a range of experiences throughout the week for all children:

Monday:	Whole School Collective Worship Assembly
Tuesday:	Class Collective Worship
Wednesday:	Class Collective Worship
Thursday:	Class Collective Worship
Friday:	Class Collective Worship, with some Whole School Collective Worship Assembly to which parents, family and the community are invited for special occasions

Collective Worship is celebrated in each class on days when the children are not participating in Key Stage or Whole School collective worship. They can be teacher led or child led.

Assembly themes are taken from the traditions of the Catholic faith and we often reflect the festivals and events of the Christian calendar, or make use of the readings used at Mass on a Sunday.

Harvest, Christmas and Easter Celebrations are central whole school celebrations for our school family.

On Monday our Celebration Assembly is two-fold. Collective worship is led by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher. The second part of the assembly is a celebration of the achievements and learning of the children during the week.

We invite parents to Friday assemblies to celebration special occasions and we encourage them to attend, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and the school work together to support the achievements of our children. We welcome governors' attendance at our assemblies at any time.

Principles of Collective Worship

Collective Worship should be inclusive. It should:

- Led by teachers, visitors and children
- Be pupil centered, related to pupils' own experience and relevant to pupil concern
- Acknowledge diversity
- Involve pupils as active participants and match the needs of pupils
- Foster a sense of community

Collective Worship should be educational. It should:

- Be a learning experience
- Be related to pupils' own experiences
- Be properly planned with reference to the school Mission Statement, policy and procedures
- Relate to the liturgical calendar, reflecting significant seasons and dates
- Relate to other curriculum activities and should be used to celebrate learning at the end of each Come and See topic
- Be recorded through plans, displays, photographs, children's contributions etc, making note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- Be evaluated regularly by staff and children to ensure high quality Collective Worship is being shared
- Provide the school with opportunities to reflect on the education it provides
- Have a purpose and celebrate educational achievements
- Be consistent with the aims of the school

Collective Worship should be spiritual. It should:

- Be time to be still and reflect, and be made special
- Make pupils feel calm, relaxed and secure
- Include a variety of silence, reflection, word, action, music and imagery
- Provide opportunities for children to take part in a variety of spiritual opportunities
- A time for reflection
- Provide an opportunity for children to take part in worship

Collective Worship should offer:

- A focus point using artefacts, candles, symbols and lighting.
- Time for reflection
- Communal prayers
- Private prayer

- Scriptural reference
- Music/dance/mime/singing

Children participate in all areas of collective worship, participating fully in acts of worship. They are also involved in preparation and delivery of collective worship, regularly leading class collective worship.

Appendix 1: Guidance for the introduction of formal prayers

Nursery and Reception

- Sign of the cross
- Morning and Evening prayers
- Prayers before and after meals
- Responses at Mass (And with your Spirit. Peace be with you. Thanks be to God)
- Greeting the Gospel (Alleluia)
- Prayers for the blessing of the Advent wreath, lighting of the candles
- Prayers for Christmas

Year 1 and Year 2

Those above plus:

- Our Father
- Hail Mary
- Glory be to the Father
- Simple Magnificat
- Come Holy Spirit
- Act of sorrow

Key Stage 2

Those above plus:

- I confess
- Angelus
- Benedictus
- Magnificat
- Eternal Rest
- Act of love
- Act of contrition
- The Rosary
- Some prayer used at Mass
- Saints prayers e.g. St Teresa of Avila, St Francis of Assisi