

ST. WINEFRIDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement

Welcome to St Winefride's where we come together to learn, laugh, listen, live and love in the presence of Jesus.

At our school, we believe that everyone is valued as a unique gift from God.

We work together to create an engaging learning environment, where all children are challenged to achieve their full potential

Rationale

St. Winefride's Catholic Primary school in its approach to collective worship endeavours to consider 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.
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

Collective worship in St. Winefride's Catholic Primary school is an educational activity and experience.

- To which all can contribute.
- From which all can gain.

The Act of Worship at St. Winefride's is in accordance with the rites, practices and beliefs of the Catholic Church. It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor this. Every child has the opportunity to participate in daily worship.

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.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils.¹ (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.

¹ 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.

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.

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

Purpose

- To provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God in a variety of ways.
- To contemplate something of the mystery of God.
- To enrich religious experience.
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development.
- To take time 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to'.
- To participate fully in worship.
- To consider spiritual and moral issues.
- To enable pupils to explore their own beliefs.
- To encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation or through listening to and reflecting upon God's word.
- To develop community spirit.
- To promote a common ethos and shared values.
- To reinforce positive attitudes (and behaviour).
- To respect the diversity of belief and commitment.
- To be Catholic in character. To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.
- To reflect the tradition of the church with Christ at its heart.
- To explore child's own experiences.
- To understand and experience prayer, liturgical prayer and liturgy as different ways of encountering God and developing individual and collective relationship with the holy.

Assemblies

Monday: 10:15 Whole School Assembly based upon the Sunday Gospel. Led by HT and DHT.

Tuesday: Class based prayer

Wednesday/Thursday: 10:15 Whole School Assembly based upon Liturgical Year. Led by Prayer Teams.

Wednesday/Thursday: Class Based Prayer. Whole School singing 3pm.

Friday: Class Based Prayer/Achievement Assemblies

Whole School

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher take responsibility for the conduct of the Monday assemblies, on a rota basis. These Assemblies are Gospel based.

Regular whole school assemblies will also be held to celebrate 'Other Faiths' and other special occasions throughout the year, such as Ash Wednesday. These replace the weekly key stage assemblies. Each class will take a turn to provide a class assembly based upon The Way, the Truth, and the Life topic they are studying.

We have regular visits from the local 'Open the Book' group. Open the Book (OtB) is an exciting storytelling project where Bible stories are shared with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. As invited guests in school, storytelling teams use the [Open the Book programme](#) to prepare and present a 10–15-minute scripted Bible story to a school assembly, involving the children as much as possible.

During Lent and Advent prayer sessions as a whole school or as a key stage may be held daily. This is to encourage the awareness of this time being 'special', not just a period of time that leads to Easter or to Christmas. In addition, during Lent and Advent other special services are also held such as 'Stations of the Cross' or we invite visitors in to enrich our prayer times, such as the Christian theatre company, The B (Bible) Tales.

The Prayer Teams consist of a pair of teachers who deliver an assembly linked to the Liturgical Year and a linked theme. The teams also include two children who are part of the Liturgy Leaders group. A timetable is followed so that each team has planning, delivery and evaluation time linked to their Liturgical Prayer. This is part of the induction process for new staff, as well as providing experience and support to existing staff and children linked to leading staff and children in prayer throughout school.

Purpose & Content of Assemblies

- We provide opportunities for children and staff to gather together in reflection on the Word of God through Scripture and to respond in communal prayer and praise.
- We encourage staff and pupils to contribute their appropriate skills, gifts and experience in a spirit of offering and sharing.
- We use flexible patterns of presentation by Staff and/or pupils; the use of drama, dance, music and visual arts is as important as the spoken word.
- We explore the belief of our Christian tradition and other World religions.
- We welcome visitors to share their experience and expertise.

The format for Collective Worship at St. Winefride's will be based upon the Emmaus Model:

Gather – how we welcome and come together; the setting, environment, music, icons, candles etc.

Listen – who will read, scripture, poem, prayer, story etc. The Word of God in our midst.

Respond – the response – prayers, reflection, questions, discussion etc. Opportunity to pray.

Go Forth – something to take away or hold on to from this act of worship, into their daily lives. A challenge to 'give what has been received.'

How Collective Worship is delivered:

- collective worship should be spiritual and an invitation for each individual to encounter the holy in our lives
- a time for stillness and reflection
- a special time – conducive to worship
- children should feel calm, relaxed and secure
- child-centred, related to children own experiences and relevant to their lives so that they may actively be engaged
- children will evaluate their collective worship experience
- class prayer time.

- children also pray together in class at the beginning of the school day, before lunch, after lunch and at the end of each day

Classroom Worship when not an assembly

- Teacher and teaching assistants pray with the children at the start of each day, at lunchtime and at the end of each day.
- Teachers are encouraged to employ a variety of styles of prayer in their classroom. Progressively, children will be helped towards experiencing short periods of reflection and silent prayer. They will also have the opportunity to plan, lead and evaluate class prayer regularly for and with their peers.
- We feel it is important to provide focal points, both in the classroom and around the school.
- OneLife Music OPEN packages are purchased and used to enrich daily prayer at four distinct times of the year: For Creation (4th September to 4th October), For Advent, For Lent and For May (with Mary).
- Classes use the Mark Ten Mission liturgies and little liturgies as they see fit within their classroom prayer and worship.

Liturgy/Mass

The whole school together with parents, relatives, friends and parishioners gather to celebrate Mass at least once a month and on other special occasions. The children play an active part in the Mass by reading and singing. These occasions we believe are prayerful and joyful. A time when our uniqueness as a Catholic school is both highlighted and celebrated. We provide opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist at school and in our parish church. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is also offered at particular times of the year, such as Advent and Lent.

Hymn Practices

This time spent singing is a religious experience and is marked as special. The children enjoy singing and it is a very joyful way in which to worship God.

Planning

At St. Winefride's, we aim to ensure that collective worship is planned:

- through consultation with appropriate parties,
- with reference to the church's seasons and the curriculum,
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and wider community,
- through the use of the Emmaus model and on school planning formats, as appropriate.

Children with Special Needs

The whole approach to Collective Worship is inclusive rather than exclusive. The individual needs of every child are considered when Collective Worship is being planned.

Equal Opportunities

Boys and girls are treated with equal respect. Care is taken to ensure that all material used in developing the spiritual needs of the children addresses issues of gender, race and religion. Consideration is also made in making sure that all learners can access the material shared and that there is no barrier to their immersion in the opportunities given to encounter God.

Continuity & Progression

The content and delivery of Collective Worship allows for the children to progress and develop spiritually at their own level of understanding.

Recording of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is recorded:

- on an assembly planner and linked folder to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- each class has a class prayer book to record evidence of class worship
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Each class collective worship is evaluated by the class teacher and children are encouraged to play a part in this process knowing that their views are valued and respected.

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated by the RE Leader and SLT 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.

Training for Collective Worship will be part of the induction process for all new staff.

Conclusion

In conclusion St. Winefride's aims to provide a variety of experiences which:

- are led by children, staff, priests and visitors,
- uses a balance of quiet reflection, silence, prayers, responses, music, songs, dance, drama, video and slides,
- ensures the theme, focus, delivery, length and resources are appropriate to the interests, age range and ability of the children,
- sets an appropriate atmosphere with a sense of order and occasion, including entry and exit,
- ensures the possibility of conscious, active participation for all present,
- are closely linked to the Liturgical Year of the Church.

Through rich collective acts of worship (prayer, liturgical prayer and liturgy) which reflect the school's Mission Statement, Religious Education and Spiritual and Moral Development Policies we hope to provide an opportunity for spiritual, moral and social development of the whole school community.