



ST. HELEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY (including collective worship)

March 2023

**RESPECT YOURSELF
RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY,
RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY,
RESPECT EVERYONE IN OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY,
BUT MOST OF ALL, RESPECT GOD OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN.**

Introduction

At St. Helen's we believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives.

It 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.

Legal Requirements

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

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.

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 will 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, within the Come and See RE curriculum.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of St Helen's Primary School.

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.

The Aims of Collective Worship

Collective Worship at St Helen's aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using 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 at St Helen's will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead worship;
- 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. Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

Planning, content and celebration

Collective Worship is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, Saints days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Remembrance Day, etc.

Parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

The timetable of Collective Worship is as below.

- Class led liturgy (Monday)
- Gospel assembly (Tuesday)
- KS1 and KS2 Hymn Practice (Wednesday)
- Class led liturgy (Thursday)

- Celebration Assembly (Friday)

Each class prepares an class assembly each year. These are a reflection and celebration of their classroom work and may be linked to the 'Come and See' topics being studied at that time.

Additionally the Key Stage 2 classes have the responsibility of preparing a celebration assembly linked to the Saints of the United Kingdom:

Year 3-St David's Day

Year 4-Saint Andrew's Day

Year 5-St George's Day

Year 6-St Patrick's Day

Pupils from all phases of the school prepare Christmas celebrations, including Nativity services, outdoor carols and the Carol Service in church.

Year 4 also prepare an Easter performance to which parents/carers are invited.

Year 5 prepare a Remembrance Day assembly for the whole school.

Year 6 prepare a leavers assembly to which parents/carers are invited.

During May and October pupils and parents/carers are invited to pray the Rosary outside.

Our Feast day is celebrated as a whole school Mass. Recently we have celebrated this outside on the school field and have had a family shared lunch afterwards.

In addition, in Key Stage 2 each class prepares a Class Mass:

Year 3, celebrate the First Holy Communion with a Mass in the school hall. Year 6, celebrate their leavers Mass in the school Hall. Parents/carers are invited to both celebrations. Years 4 and 5 prepare a class Mass. The children are becoming more confident with the preparation of these services.

There are opportunities for children in Years 4, 5 and 6 to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at school, during Advent and Lent. A short service is held, after which the children receive individual confession from St Helen's priests. A Sorry Service is held for Year 1, 2 and 3, led by the priests.

All our forms of Collective Worship follow a similar structure. We **gather**, using prayers or actions or music. Then, we listen to **scripture**, readings and reflect on the meaning of the scripture we have heard and after that we **respond** by doing something or saying a prayer together. Finally, we **go forth** by reflecting on the scripture and taking this forward into our work throughout the day. It is wonderful to see the children excited, enthusiastic and deepening their faith through prayer and liturgy. Our Liturgy leaders are becoming more confident in leading Prayer and Liturgy.

Resources

All resources for Prayer and Liturgy are located in the prayer cupboard in the upstairs prayer area.

The learning environment

Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school reflect the liturgical season and reference 'Come and See' topics. In this way, they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Each class must have a cross/crucifix, dedicated class display board and a prayer focal area. The prayer focal area should have a candle for reflection, an age appropriate Bible and a living plant to remind us of God's creation. The area should also display a cloth in the colour relating to the Church season.

Red- Pentecost

Purple- Lent /Advent

Green- Ordinary time

Yellow- Easter /Christmas

The display board is expected to display the keywords for the current topic, the Big question and a selection of children's work as a celebration.

The school vision, St Helen's values and class saint should also be on display in the classroom.

Sacraments

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and The Eucharist is an integral part of the Come and See programme. However, full preparation is undertaken within the parish setting, being supported in school where possible.

Prayer

Children are taught daily prayers and also the prayers and responses of the Mass as appropriate to their age and stage of development. Each classroom has a focal prayer point and an RE area. Children pray, together with their teacher, at the beginning and end of the day. Prayer takes many forms and may be carefully structured or more informal. Children are encouraged to pray for the needs of others and for special requests. They may themselves ask prayers for particular intentions.

Above all, prayer is about communication with God: we both speak and listen to Him. It may take the form of adoration, thanksgiving, repentance or intercession. Children and staff alike are encouraged to be drawn into prayer and worship through a variety of celebrations. These are enhanced by:

- a) hymns
- b) reflective music
- c) silence
- d) spoken and sung prayers
- e) movement / dance
- f) scripture
- g) stories
- h) atmosphere – candles, icons, focal points
- i) drama.

Parents play an invaluable role in leading their children in prayer. They are informed of the class prayers for their child and are invited to celebrate Mass and assemblies when their child is involved.

Role of R.E. Leader in Prayer and Collective Worship

- Formulating a written policy for Collective Worship
- Begin to develop a plan for Collective Worship included in the RE Improvement Plan.
- Ensuring that Collective Worship is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that Collective Worship takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors and Head Teacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Collective Worship and providing feedback
- Informing the Head Teacher of standards and developments in Collective Worship

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Collective Worship
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and Head Teacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Collective Worship
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Collective Worship
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the Parish Priest
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development / Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Collective Worship
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Collective Worship including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently

Policy Monitoring and Review

The school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it fulfils the aims of our policy in an updated and appropriate manner. This policy is monitored by the R.E. Lead and is evaluated and reviewed annually.

Please see the RE Staff Handbook and St Helen's website for classroom prayers for each Year group.