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Collective Worship Policy 2024

‘Caring, learning, and achieving together as part of God’s family’

At Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School, Jesus Christ is central to every aspect of school life. We aim to be a living, loving, and sacramental community which is inspired by the life of Christ and the teachings of the Church, rooted in Gospel values. We believe that Jesus reveals to us who God is and what his plan for us is.

Collective Worship at Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School names and celebrates God’s presence in our lives. It is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God as he has revealed himself. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God’s invitation to grow in our relationship with him – a relationship made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

We believe that God has a special plan for every single one of us, whoever we are. Our part in this plan isn’t just limited to things ‘spiritual’, or times when we do “religious things.” It involves every aspect of our lives, from the things we pray about, to how we live as responsible global citizens. We are called to work together towards the common good, and to treat everyone as our brothers and sisters. This is something we all share.

The Catholic Church has principles of social teaching that we share with our children through all that we do. At Margaret Roper, Catholic Social Teaching is incorporated into our curriculum and everything we do including Collective Worship. Children are asked to put their faith into action and reflect on how their worship and learning enables them to do so.

Catholic Social Teaching underpins the essence of our daily school life. As members of the Catholic Church, we are all called upon to uphold the dignity of all human beings, to care for creation, and to reach out to our sisters and brothers in need. Catholic tradition – including the teaching of successive popes - emphasises that it is our duty to work together to bring about a more just and peaceful world: to put love into action. It is vital that our children can articulate the connection between Jesus’ teaching, the life of prayer, and doing good deeds. We use resources such as CAFOD’s to help us explain Catholic Social teaching to our children.

Aims

It is the policy of the school to help children grow in their Faith and is based on the teaching and traditions of the Catholic Church. We aim to encourage all children in our care to develop a personal relationship

with God through prayer. Our schools are worshipping communities. Each act of worship should enable the child to hear God's Word, respond to God's Word, and be sent forward with a sense of mission.

Collective Worship should provide opportunities for all children and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To enrich religious experience
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To have an opportunity to ask for forgiveness and repent.
- To participate fully
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To explore personal beliefs

Collective Worship in our schools is practised in various ways:

- Celebrations of Holy Mass
- Other whole-school acts of worship – assemblies, special liturgies, devotions
- Year group or key stage acts of worship (liturgies)
- Classroom prayers throughout the school day

Leading Worship

Any member of staff in school may be asked to take part in or to plan and lead Collective Worship. Children are taught and encouraged to plan and lead Collective Worship appropriate to their age. The Governors and the Headship team are responsible for ensuring Collective Worship is happening throughout the day.

Planning and Content of Worship

Collective Worship is planned following the structure of the liturgical seasons of the Church's year, the RE programme, feast days and other significant dates e.g. Remembrance Sunday, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, etc. A variety of prayer styles are used appropriate to the age, stage of development and the occasion. Parents, governors and parishioners are invited to participate in some celebrations. Classroom Collective Worship uses resources from Ten:Ten and The Wednesday Word (the Wednesday Word is shared weekly with parents) For Masses and Liturgies we follow the Diocesan guidance in *"Do this in memory of me": Celebrating Mass in schools*.

Prayer

Helping children to pray is fostering of a relationship with God. We support children on their journey in faith. Children are given experience of personal and communal prayer by being encouraged to speak in their own way to God and by being introduced gradually to formal words for prayer at the appropriate level. We celebrate our relationship with God throughout the school day therefore prayer cannot be confined to acts of Collective Worship. Throughout the Religious Education (RE) programme and time with

the class teacher, prayer builds upon the children's natural spontaneous expressions of joy, wonder, awe, concern, thanks, sorrow, sadness, anger, fear, and disappointment evoked through their growing awareness of themselves, others, and the world around them. We are aware of children's need for expression through speech, song, movement, art, writing, and silence. We are aware of the importance of giving the children a focus for prayer in each classroom and whenever acts of worship are held. Each child has an individual prayer book to use in class whenever they desire. We have a beautiful prayer garden (the Father Salmon Garden) which children are encouraged to use independently for prayer, as well as with their classes. Around the school there are opportunities for prayer and reflection.

Prayer Tables

Prayer tables are clearly visible and accessible within areas of our schools and there is one in each classroom. Liturgical colours are used for any cloth or drape, e.g. purple during Advent and Lent, white during the Easter season, green for Ordinary Time. Prayer tables often include something which reflects the topic e.g. baptismal candle, advent wreath, palm cross during Lent and/or other appropriate objects e.g. a cross, crucifix, or statue. They also contain a candle (battery LED) and a Bible or religious storybook, open at a relevant page.

Staff Prayer

Staff pray together at meetings and briefings. Governors pray together before their meetings. We start meetings with parents with prayer and sometimes a Liturgy, thus making an offering of the whole enterprise to God. It is an expectation that staff participate in all acts of Collective Worship to ensure that they are fully part of the school's worship community and can actively support students in their prayer and faith journeys.

Legal Requirements

It is a requirement that there is a daily act of worship offered for all children. We have a strong tradition of being fully inclusive. Collective Worship and assembly are distinct activities. In our schools they usually form part of the same gathering. 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. Responsibility for Collective Worship lies with the Governors and the Headship Team. All parents/carers have a right to withdraw their child(ren) from Collective Worship. It should be noted that it is difficult to manage withdrawal from Collective Worship in totality in our schools, as Collective Worship can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all children, or separate acts of worship in school groups or individuals. It should also be noted that prayer will not be confined to acts of Collective Worship. Our preference for dealing with withdrawal is to encourage presence, without participation, during Collective Worship. Whilst we respect parental wishes, we would also encourage discussions of any individual concerns regarding Collective Worship with a member of the Headship Team.

Please also see on our diocesan website:

[Collective-Worship-Policy-July-2019.pdf](#)

Policy Date – September 2024

Review Date – September 2025