

St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Collective Worship Policy

'Loving and Learning'

Our Mission statement underpins this policy and its principles.

Aims:

Our aim is to nurture and develop in all children a sense of prayer as a meaningful and desirable facet of our relationship with God.

Objectives:

- To develop community spirit and to promote a common ethos and shared values
- To enable children to reflect upon and celebrate the word of God
- To enable children to see prayer as a natural expression of their developing relationship with God
- To encourage spontaneous prayer as a means of communicating
- To know the formal prayers of the Church such as –
The Sign of the Cross
Our Father
Hail Mary
Acts of Contrition
Simple creeds and Gloria's – and to be able to recite them collectively
- To give opportunities for silent reflection and to develop in children a sense of stillness leading to meditation

The place of collective worship in the whole school policy:

The act of Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. It is a way of affirming our individuality and our communal belonging to the Body of Christ

Equal Opportunities:

All children are given an equal chance to join in collective worship according to their age and ability

At St Gregory's each day begins and ends with a short prayer. The main purpose of our school assemblies is to bring the school community or part of the school community together in Worship and Prayer. Within each assembly there is always an opportunity for Prayer and Worship, and involves the children taking part in a variety of prayer experiences.

Opportunities are provided for the children to participate in the celebration of year group and whole school Masses.

WHOLE SCHOOL PLANS FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Day	Place	Leader	Focus
Monday	Hall	Head teacher	Liturgy of the Word: based on Sunday's Liturgy (Gospel Message)
Tuesday	Classroom	Staff	A brief act of worship using formal prayers/children's prayer in form of a prayer service
Tuesday	Hall	Music. Coordinator	Hymn Practice
Wednesday	Classroom	Staff/children	All classes participate in class prayer services.
Thursday	Classroom	Staff/children	KS1 – A brief act of worship using formal prayers
Thursday	Hall	Staff	KS2 – Assembly based on SEAL/formal prayers
Friday	Classroom	Teacher	A brief act of worship using formal prayers
Friday	Hall	Rota	An act of Collective worship celebrating the week's achievements and reminds children of the gospel message

- Graces are said at the end of morning/start of afternoon sessions. Night prayers are said in class at the end of every school day except Friday
- Worship at certain times of the year – parents and families of the class whose turn it is are invited to participate
- Further celebrations include:
 - Children's Masses at the beginning and end of the School terms
 - Class Masses to which parents and parishioners are invited
 - Family Masses throughout the year
 - Harvest Festival Mass
 - Children join the Parish for the celebration of Mass on special feasts and Holy days
 - Inspire Masses and preparation in school with children and parents
 - Remembrance Assemblies
 - Carol Service
 - KS1 Nativity
 - Foundation Stage Nativity
 - Holy Week Liturgies
 - Special Assemblies to welcome particular individuals to school
 - KS2 services of Reconciliation followed by individual Confession
 - Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
 - Stations of the Cross

Parents and parishioners will be invited through the school newsletter, the parish bulletin and personal letters from the children and teacher

Teaching

Although most acts of worship are initiated by the teacher the children have opportunities for discussion, contribution and participation according to their ages and abilities. The person leading the worship values all contributions.

When children plan their own liturgies at KS2 the pupils are given initial guidance from the teacher and then allowed to plan and lead the worship. At KS1 the teacher invites children to select elements for use in their liturgy.

Pupils with special educational needs

All children's contributions are valued and children receive assistance if necessary when planning their liturgies.

Assessment

No formal assessments made of collective worship.

We complete planning sheets for Masses and services that are evaluated and reflected upon to ensure we are continually improving the children's worship experiences.

ICT

Use is made of the interactive whiteboard and CDs. We encourage children to write and research prayer as part of lessons.

Evaluation and Review

This policy should be reviewed every three years, or earlier if curriculum changes need to be implemented.

Information on Prayer

Why is prayer necessary?

Prayer is the foundation of Christian Life. Prayer is communication or communion with God. Through prayers we are drawn deeper into the life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself taught us the need for prayer. In Gethsemane as He prepared Himself for the climax of His life, Jesus received the strength He needed in prayer to His Father, "Abba Father Take this cup away from me, but let it be as you not I, would have it." At moments of His public ministry when those in need were pressing around Him, Jesus went off to a lonely place and prayed there.

What is Prayer?

We can pray anywhere and at any time. The **first step** is to place ourselves, as we are, in the presence of God. The **second step** in prayer is to pray. This means speaking to the Lord, asking Him for our needs and thanking Him for the many gifts He has given to us. This leads to praise and adoration. The **third step** is to be silent so the Lord Himself can guide the direction of our hearts.

How do we Pray?

The best prayers are those that come from the heart. There are times however, when we find it almost "impossible" to pray: and then we need prayer books and the prayers we have learned by heart. Our children should have the opportunity to find out about and respond in a variety of ways to Jesus' example and teaching with regard to prayer. They should be encouraged to explore the different forms of prayer, and to be helped to grow in appreciation of the importance of prayer in sustaining a living relationship with God. Children's experience of prayer and worship in school, which for some of our children will be the only prayer experiences they will receive, will have a deep impact on their spiritual development as Christians, and a love of their Catholic heritage which they can take into their adult life. Their loves of Prayer Worship must be continually developed and fostered.

In prayer we become aware of God's presence with us and his love for us. We listen to Him in order to discover His will for us and to express to Him our gratitude, praise, love and adoration.

We can foster the children’s life of prayer by helping them become aware of God’s presence in their lives and His love for them and by leading them to respond to Him in a manner appropriate to their age.

Children learn to pray chiefly by sharing in the faith and prayer of adult Christians, especially parents, priests and teachers. Therefore we believe that we should go a step beyond teaching them prayers, we should pray with them in their presence. We should encourage them to pray by themselves, especially in the morning and at night. There are many ways of helping the children meet God Our Father in prayer:

❖ Prayers of silence	❖ Own prayer
❖ Spontaneous prayer	❖ Prayers through gestures or actions
❖ Prayers of the Church	❖ Prayers through music and song

Prayers of Silence: The help the children participate in a prayerful silence, we can use various ways of focussing their minds on prayer. We can ask them to concentrate on an object, a picture, a lighted candle, some quiet background music or by giving them guidance about what to think: “Let’s think about

Spontaneous Prayer: Once we have begun it is often difficult to stop children praying spontaneously. The children may not be able to express their thoughts accurately at first, and may they may initially be shy or embarrassed. Many of their prayers may be prayers of petition for a sick parent, grandparent or friend. At St Gregory’s we try to encourage them to pray not only for what they want, but also to pray that things will turn out as God knows best. We also encourage the children to express thanksgiving, love and praise to God the Father in their spontaneous prayer.

Praying through gesture or action: We encourage children to make even the simplest gestures thoughtfully so that the gesture or action is a prayer in itself Gestures that the children will be taught as they move through the school will include: making the Sign of the Cross, joining their hands, offering the sign of peace, bowing their heads at the name of Jesus, genuflection, hands gestures, processions etc.

Formal/Traditional Prayers: As the children move through school they will be taught and introduced to the commonly used prayers of the Church so that they are able to join in and participate in parish celebrations. We also have a school Prayer book that the children are encouraged to read and share. The introduction of many of the responses of the Holy Mass are incorporated into their classroom and assembly prayer and worship celebrations. Our aim is to help the children to develop a reverence and a positive attitude to praying.

Praying through Music and Song: Listening to reflective music can create an atmosphere conducive to prayer and reflection. The singing of hymns can be so joyful. “Singing hymns is praying twice.” Reflective music and singing are both used during prayer and worship sessions.

An act of Collective Worship with children should last about one minute for each year of the child’s life: e.g. A maximum of 5 minutes for Reception/Year 1 children. A maximum of 10 minutes for Yr 6 children.