

St Columba's School Prayer and Worship Policy Jn 10:10

Our school is proud to live the vision of Jn10:10 "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" Our school has a distinctive character, because everything we do is based on the values of the Gospels. The purpose of our community is to recognise the worth and dignity of all and to fully develop the talents of each person.

1. Introduction

We recognise that each individual here is on a personal journey of faith. Participation in worship and opportunities for prayer are essential for spiritual development and for deepening our relationship with God. It is only that when we meet with Jesus through spiritual foods that we are FULL and can glimpse eternal life.



We believe that prayer and worship in our school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is knowing God is walking beside us supporting and guiding. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with Him. We therefore seek to ensure that collective worship is a learning experience as well as a spiritual encounter to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

We frame these values within the 5Ws:

Welcome: How we welcome people into our school community.

Welfare: How we care for the well-being of our school community.

Witness: How we reflect the teachings of the Bible through the way in which we live our lives.

Word: How we use the Word of God as the template for life and learning.

Worship: How we confidently and enthusiastically proclaim and explore our faith.

2 Aims

2.1 To contribute to pupils' faith and spiritual development so they can:

- o Develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration whilst becoming more aware of the 'big questions' of life.
- o Understand the importance of prayer and worship in daily living and how it helps us to grow in our relationships with God and with others.
- o Experience prayer and worship to give them a real sense of being valued members of their Catholic community.
- o Recognise a sense of the sacred and holy.
- o Distinguish between the different opportunities for prayer and worship and to celebrate together the feasts and seasons of the Christian calendar, with particular emphasis on Advent, Christmas, Lent Easter and Pentecost.
- o Have opportunities for worship, and to use prayer and worship as a form of celebration.
- o Ensure familiarity with prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.
- o Develop reverence and respect through the experience of liturgy, scripture and prayer.
- o Develop an understanding of the use of scripture used by the worshipping community especially the importance of the Gospel.
- o Appreciate the distinctive nature of the importance of the celebration of the Mass as central to the life of the Catholic community.
- o Experience prayer and worship to give them a real sense of being valued members of their Catholic community.
- o Build upon the home/school/parish link by including members of the home and parish families in our collective worship whenever possible.
- o To gain awareness and understanding of the wider Christian family beyond the school/parish community.

2.2 We will achieve this by:

- o Reflecting on moral and social issues.
- o Becoming more aware of and respecting the nature and needs of others.
- o Developing inclusive attitudes of tolerance and acceptance of difference.
- o Celebrating work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum.

- o Contributing to the school community, and the wider community.
 - o Developing and reflecting on the values of the school.
 - o Celebrating our links with other schools locally and across the World.
 - o Celebrating and giving thanks for God's world
 - o Listening to stories from other faiths and learn about their significance.
 - o Developing awareness of how other faiths worship.
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3 Teaching and Learning

Worship contributes to the general development of pupils. Opportunities will be provided for pupils to develop leadership skills, performance skills, singing ability, speaking in groups and in front of others, and to participate in group preparation and presentation. Keeping worship simple promotes dignity and respect, can enhance the celebration and enables all present to engage and feel involved.

4 Prayer

4.1 Children have a natural aptitude for prayer. They are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment, and elation to the world around them. The whole of creation is new to them and their days are full of endless exploration and discovery.

In the early years, the main task of the teacher is to recognise this for what it is – the beginnings of prayer – and to create and maintain an environment where this is fostered and developed: Rooms full of colour, sounds, shapes, natural objects, pets, flowers, plants, sand and water. An opportunity to appreciate the beautiful world with wonder and awe. To be aware of God around us and to say 'thank you'

4.2 Adults who themselves respond in joy and thanks, sorrow and love, to the world around them, to each other and to the children, create a focal point for prayer during each topic.

5. Organisation of Prayer and Worship at our School

5.1 Prayers are said by each class at the start and at the end of the day and before and after lunch. The prayer room is a space for quiet personal reflection. We have the following assemblies in school:

Mon – Class worship

Tues – Class worship and Junior prayers

Wed – Infant hymns and class worship

Thurs – Class worship

Friday – Whole school assembly and Junior hymns

Each child in school has a prayer partner and classes come together to pray

Our Legion of Mary, Mini Vinnie, Laudato Si, Justice and Prayer Leader groups are prayer in action.

5.2 The Gospel message is shared in Friday Assembly using the Sunday reading and reflected on throughout the week so that the children are witnesses to the Word of God.

The Head Teacher uses this reading for Mon staff prayers so staff are aware of the message.

5.5 Masses are celebrated by the whole school at least twice per term, usually once at church and once in the school hall. Members of the parish join us and we worship together. We also visit church regularly for other services such as Stations of the Cross and Reconciliation.

5.6 Each May, parishioners join us for our May Procession. We process around the school grounds, weather permitting, flying flags and proclaiming our faith.

5.7 Teachers plan non Eucharistic liturgies as part of their RE curriculum, usually at the end of each RE curriculum unit.

5.8 A prayer group focusing on the Rosary is run in October and our Legion of Mary group lead prayer groups throughout the year.

5.9a Each class has a designated area for prayer and worship which is updated regularly. Each class also has a display board which features curriculum.

5.9b Our main entrance is designated for prayer and worship and other areas throughout the school are designated for prayer and worship. These include prayer stations and our outdoor Sacred Space.

5.9c We encourage home-school prayer links where ever possible. Specifically, we have Lenten and Advent Prayer Bags which go home with each child in the class in turn to be shared at home.

5.9d The format for Collective Worship will include:

Gathering – How we come together, the setting, the environment and the atmosphere (quiet music, a visual focus for prayer and reflection such as icons, art and lighter candles.)

Proclaiming – Every act of worship will be centred on at least one text from the Bible. The Word of God will be proclaimed from the Bible or Lectionary.

Responding – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. This may vary (music, singing, drama, poetry, reflection or silence).

Going Forth – Children and adults will take something away from the experience of worship and be encouraged to apply it in their daily lives.

6 Forms and Styles of Prayer

Children are introduced to a variety of forms and styles of prayer:

Praying the psalms: 'I thank you for the wonder of my being' (Psalm 139)

Traditional prayers: Glory be to the Father, Our Father, Hail Mary

Repetitive prayer (Mantra): 'Jesus, remember me', or similar phrase repeated several times, slowly perhaps with background music, Taize style.

Litany/Bidding Prayers: Prayers with repeated response e.g. Pray for us/ Thanks be to God.

Meditation: Scripture reflection with use of imagination and imagery.

Bodily Prayer: Raising hands in praise, dancing, genuflecting

Prayer of the heart: Experience stillness and silence in a place of calm to listen to God and focus on creation, 'Be still and know that I am God.'

Contemplation: Looking at trees, a sunset, large picture on Interactive whiteboard, icon, and display of work from topic.

Gestures: Sign of the cross, sign of peace.

Hymns: Traditional and modern hymns in keeping with liturgical cycle Hymn practise takes place weekly and hymns are explained to the children

Music: Subject Leader provides a collection for colleagues of quiet reflective music to listen to.

Processions: We have a May processions every year in school.

Prayer services and liturgies: Formal prayer using holy water, candles, etc. When in school the children have the annual Ash Wednesday service and Key Stage 2 Penitential Services are also held in Lent. We say the Rosary in October.

Celebrations: Children attend Mass each half term on appropriate Holy days and feast days. The masses are held in the school hall or in church. There is also a celebration of achievement every Friday during our Assembly.

Visual Resources for prayer: There are pictures available on the internet. Staff also create a visual focal point for prayer in their classrooms.

Prayer of silence / meditation: Use of visual/focal points (candle, artefact or picture) and the use of background music are an important part of creating an environment for prayer.

Spontaneous Prayer: This is encouraged during collective worship and circle prayer. Children are encouraged to use their own words to express their thoughts and feelings and the session finishes with offering these prayers and thoughts to God.

Prayer through gesture or action: The children are encouraged to make the sign of the cross carefully. We make the usual sign of the cross in collective worship and at Mass. Actions to prayers are sometimes used when praying through singing and words (For example The clapping Gloria is used occasionally in Mass).

Petition: Prayers of intercession (Bidding prayers) bringing the prayers of the community before God. Praying for people, and world/local/Parish events.

Singing: Praying through music and words of the hymns – praying through understanding the meaning and reason for the hymn.

Lexcio divina: Praying using the WORD

7. Prayers for each Age Group

All of which are relevant to the age and experience of the children. The children pray each day, either within collective classroom settings or in collective group acts of worship held in the hall.

EYFS	Morning Prayer, dinnertime prayer, evening prayer.
Key Stage 1	Morning Prayer, dinnertime prayer, evening prayer, Hail Mary, Our Father, School Prayer
Key Stage 2	Morning Prayer, dinnertime prayer, evening prayer, Hail Mary, Eternal Rest, Our Father, School Prayer, Act of Contrition, The Memorare and Hail Holy Queen.

These prayers are at the end of this policy in Appendix 1.

8. Prayer Focuses / Prayer Corners

8.1 Each class has a prayer focus/ corner which is changed to reflect the present liturgical colour and RE Topic. The class prayer corner is the focal point for prayers and prayers are displayed in this area.

8.2 Staff are encouraged to keep the prayer tables attractive and tidy and emphasis is on quality and appropriateness of the artefacts and pictures. Quality rather than quantity is emphasised as often the simplest picture or artefact can convey a powerful message.

9. Special Times of the Year

Advent: The appropriate purple colour is used and teachers are encouraged to display an Advent Wreath, crib and Advent calendar. The final collective worship of the year celebrates Jesus' birth with the lighting of the Christmas candle.

Lent: The appropriate purple colour is used. The palm cross is also displayed. During Lent the children also visit church to look at and reflect on The Stations Of The Cross.

Holy Week – Maundy Thursday and Good Friday: This is marked by reflection on the Stations of the Cross.

Easter Sunday: Colour for Easter Sunday is white.

Ascension Thursday: The prayer focus for this is a Picture Bible opened at the appropriate place, a candle and crucifix. White is used.

Pentecost: Remembering the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles, celebrations of the Holy Spirit are marked with a red coloured cloth.

Corpus Christi – The Body of Christ: This remembers the gift of Jesus through the Eucharist and how Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist.

All Saints and All Souls / Remembrance Day: During November a display remembers those who have gone before us to heaven. Poppies are displayed on a white prayer table with a candle. During November we focus on Prayer for the Deceased 'May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen'

Honouring Our Lady: October – The Month of the Rosary ; May – Month of Mary

October is celebrated as the month of the Rosary. During May we hold a May Procession. This is usually held outdoors. We say prayers and sing hymns whilst processing and place flowers under Mary's statue and crown Our Lady's statue before returning to class.

10. Sacramental Programme

10.1 In school we use the Sacramental celebrations of Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Communion as a focus for worship. Prayer and assemblies are used to pray for the children who are involved in the programme. It is also a reminder to other children about the importance and relevance of the Sacraments.

10.2 Children and parents attend meetings in the Parish Rooms and at church as part of the Sacramental Programme. They also complete work in class as part of their preparation. Catechists work with the children at the training sessions and offer their prayers and support.

11. Prayer Leaders

11.1 We assist the parish priest and the lay people on Walney in they work.

11.2 They meet weekly to prepare collective worship and to plan events for the term. They act as ambassadors for our school and carry out duties such as showing parents around school on Parents' Evenings.

12. Staff Prayer

12.1 "One of the distinctive features of the Catholic school is that it proclaims itself as a faith community ... as part of their life as a faith community, Catholic schools are committed to communal prayer. There is an expectation that all teachers will play an active part in this."

12.2 All meetings in school begin with a prayer or reflection providing an opportunity to be still and quiet at the end of the day.

12.3 Staff follow the timetable and programme set for collective worship and school assemblies organised at the beginning of each term.

13. Parental Involvement

13.1 Parents are invited to attend class assemblies and collective worship. They attend Masses in school and at church with the children as well as the other liturgies celebrated in the school. Parents also attend the Christmas, Easter and end of year collective worship events.

13.2 They are encouraged to pray and worship at home with their children.

13.3 Our weekly WED WORD which goes home with all pupils shares the themes for coming collective worship

13.4 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by governors every three years, or earlier if required.

SCHOOL PRAYERS:

MORNING PRAYER:

O my God, we love you. You're with me night and day. I want to love you always in all I do and say. I'll try to please you Father. Bless me through the day. Amen

GRACE BEFORE MEALS:

EYFS Thank you Lord for my lunch

KS1 &2 Bless us O God as we sit together. Bless the food we eat today. Bless the hands that make the food. Bless us, O God. Amen.

GRACE AFTER MEALS:

Thank You O God for the food we have eaten. Thank you God for all our friends.

Thank you God for everything. Thank you God. Amen.

EVENING PRAYERS:

God our Father we come to say thank you for your love today. Thank you for my family and all the friends you give to me. Guard me in the dark of night and in the morning send your light. Amen.

Juniors: Angel of God my guardian dear...

ACT OF CONTRITION:

O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and by the help of your grace, I will try not to sin again.

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN:

Hail, holy queen, mother of mercy; hail our life, our sweetness and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O Clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

THE PRAYER OF ST COLUMBA

The Prayer of St. Columba Be a bright flame before me, O God a guiding star above me. Be a smooth path below me, a kindly shepherd behind me today, tonight, and forever. Alone with none but you, my God I journey on my way; what need I fear when you are near, O Lord of night and day?