



St. Ethelbert's RCP School **Collective Worship Policy**

Love, Care, Share...

Love learning as friends;

Care for our community as neighbours;

Share our faith in Jesus as disciples.

Our Aims

At St. Ethelbert's RCP, we believe that prayer and liturgy celebrate God's presence in our lives; it is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in thought, feelings, words and actions, to God's invitation to enter into a relationship with Him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Prayer and worship, in its many forms, are an integral part of life in our school and central to our Catholic tradition and heritage.

Collective worship, individual prayer time and opportunities for reflection are provided for all children from EYFS to Year 6, enriching the religious experiences of all members of our school community, including children, staff, governors and parents. We believe that our provision should be for everyone, whether they are part of a worshipping community themselves or whether school is their only experience of church. All children, no matter their faith background, are included in all aspects of our prayer and worship.

In our school, prayer and worship aims to provide the opportunity for all pupils and staff to:

- Contemplate something of the mystery of God
- Reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- Explore their own beliefs
- Make up personal prayers for themselves or for others
- Respond to and celebrate life
- Experience a sense of belonging to a community
- Develop a common ethos and shared values
- Consider the 'Big Questions'
- Enrich religious experience
- Grow in liturgical understanding
- Learn prayers that are part of the Catholic tradition
- Reinforce positive attitudes
- Take time out to 'wonder at God's wonderful world'
- Come to terms with change and loss

Legal Requirement

We acknowledge that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This can take place at any time in the school day and can either be a single act of worship for the whole school, or separate acts of worship for different groups. We acknowledge that assemblies and collective worship are distinct activities, although they may sometimes form part of the same gathering.

Collective Worship at St. Ethelbert's

Each classroom has a prayer focus; these are changed according to the liturgical cycle. In addition, the chapel is open each lunchtime for private prayer – this is supervised by members of the GIFT team. At different times of the liturgical year, there may be a particular focus – for example, during November, the children are able to write prayers to put in the remembrance box.

At St. Ethelbert's, our children receive a wide range of prayer and liturgy experiences. In KS1 and KS2, these are timetabled across the week to ensure appropriate coverage. **(See Appendix 1)**

Whole School Collective Worship

Masses

Whole school masses are celebrated in church at the beginning and end of each term, as well as on holy days and at Harvest time. In addition, classes have their own mass once per term (Reception; Y1/2; Y3/4; Y5/6). In all masses the readings of the day, including the psalm, are used, so that the children have experience of the liturgical cycle. Children lead the Liturgy of the Word, including the Prayers of Intercession. The celebration of mass is enriched by beautiful singing. For class masses, the children are also active participants, as they help to build the altar, by taking up the chalice, towels, missal, large host etc., as well as offering up some of their work to God. Masses are well attended by parents, grandparents and parishioners.

Since the return to whole school gatherings following Covid, the Mass responses are being taught explicitly, using signs and actions to support the children, particularly those who are EAL or who are not from a Catholic worshipping community at home. The school is well supported by our parish priest, Father Morrough.

Assemblies

Whole school and '*Family Time*' assembly take place each week. These follow themes related to the liturgical cycle, as well as whole school 'missions' (e.g. Who has filled God's bucket today?). Our community takes the opportunity to have '*Me Time with God*'.

Twice a year, each year group from Reception to Year 6, presents a class assembly to the whole school and parents; this celebrates the children's learning across the curriculum, and is underpinned by a religious theme, usually from '*Come and See*' or from the liturgical cycle. Scripture is presented through drama, whilst the children lead their peers in prayer.

Other assemblies are held across the year- for example, volunteers from CAFOD present an assembly based on one of the themes of Catholic Social Justice. Workshops allow the children to explore the issues raised more deeply.

The GIFT Team leads the school's annual Remembrance Assembly, when the community prays together for those who gave up their lives for our freedom. They also lead the school in prayer and reflection during our annual 'Shelter-Seeking' assembly in Advent and our Ash Wednesday service in Lent.

In Holy Week, Y5 presents the Stations of the Cross in church, which is attended by the rest of the school, families and parishioners.

Each Friday in October and May, the GIFT Team leads children and their parents in the praying of the Holy Rosary before school.

Music

Children and staff give praise to God through our regular singing sessions. The school has a wide repertoire of spiritual music, which is used to enhance classroom collective worship, whole school assemblies and, of course, the celebration of Holy Mass in church.

Music is also an integral part of our Christmas celebrations, when the children from EYFS and KS1 perform their Nativity for families and friends; whilst the KS2 children perform in church for the whole community, including parishioners.

Classroom Collective Worship

Wherever possible, classroom collective worship is led by the children. The following types of prayer and liturgy are evident:

Traditional Prayers

From Reception, children are taught the traditional prayers of the Church such as the *Lord's Prayer*, the *Morning Offering* and the *Hail Mary*. As the children move through school, further prayers are taught, such as the *Glory Be*, *Eternal Rest* and the parts of the Mass.

Great to Pray

Sometimes, KS2 children follow a structured way of praying, using the acrostic prompt '*Great to Pray*'.

Gratitude (Say thank you to God)

Reflect (Look back – when was I not the best version of myself?)

Explore (Why has God chosen this path for me?)

Ask (Ask God for forgiveness – say you are sorry)

Talk (Think how can I be the best version of me?)

Together (Say a little prayer for someone who might need it)

Our Father (Say a prayer to God)

PRAY

This way of praying is initially modelled by adults and then is subsequently led by individual children.

Child Initiated Collective Worship

At the beginning of each half term, pupils from Years 3-6 receive an afternoon to plan their collective worship. The children work in groups to create a collective worship based on Sunday's Gospel or the scripture from their current '*Come and See*' unit. They identify a theme and follow the structure of:

- Gather
- Listen
- Respond
- Mission

using cards to plan prayers and activities which promote active participation from their peers. The cards have been differentiated, according to the developmental needs of the children. Each group leads worship once per half term.

In Reception, Years 1 and 2, planning of collective worship is done as a whole class, using a smaller selection of the prompt cards.

This type of collective worship is planned and delivered without any adult intervention.

Teacher Initiated Collective Worship

For some classroom-based collective worship, the teacher may take a greater lead in the planning, although the children will still lead the liturgy. For example, at the start of the worship, the group will **GATHER**, by singing a hymn and placing a candle, Bible and cross on the prayer focus. As each item is processed, there will be a litany or dialogue prayer. The children will then **LISTEN** to a Bible story, perhaps the Gospel of the day or Sunday mass. If it is a special feast day, the teacher may tell the children about the particular saint or event being commemorated. The children will then **RESPOND** by praying (either spontaneous prayer; silence or silent prayer with reflective music). The children will then be given a **MISSION**, as they are prompted to think about what actions they can do today to live out God's word.

In this type of collective worship, there may also be a focus child / family, who the children pray for in a special way.

Online Liturgy

Use is also made of web-based resources to provide a variety of prayer and worship experiences for our children – for example, Mark 10 Mission; Mission Together; CAFOD website.

Worship with the Wider Community

In addition to our whole school and class masses, which are held in church and attended by families and parishioners, the school also participates in other acts of worship with the wider community, including:

- the Sacramental Programme, which is run by the parish and supported by the school; the children lead the readings and prayers at both the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion
- Our GIFT Team attends termly retreat days at a local high school, joining with other pupil leaders in a day of reflection and prayer, culminating in a beautiful mass, where the children play an active part in leading worship
- In Advent, some of our children represent the school at the annual BOSCEP Carol Service, where we join together with our partner schools to praise God
- In Advent, the school takes part in '*Las Pasadas*', along with our friends from our BOSCEP schools; statues of Mary and Joseph travel from school to school seeking shelter. A special assembly of prayer and singing welcomes the statues to St. Ethelbert's, as they are brought by children from a neighbouring school. Our children then take them to the next school, attending their assembly. This wonderful event allows our whole community to reflect on the plight of refugees.

Policy Review

This policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the Headteacher and the Governors of St. Ethelbert's RCP School on an annual basis.

October 2024



Appendix 1 – Timetabling Prayer & Liturgy Experiences

Below are some possible examples of how class teachers might organise their prayer & liturgy over a week. Organisation might change regularly, depending on other events (for example, class mass, special assembly; school trips etc.)

Example 1:

Year group:	Morning	Lunchtime	After lunch / pm	End of day
Monday	Traditional prayers / focus child	Grace Before Meals	Traditional prayers / focus child	Great to Pray
Tuesday	Great to Pray	Grace Before Meals	Traditional prayers / focus child	Night Prayer
Wednesday	Traditional prayers / focus child	Grace Before Meals	Child-initiated collective worship	Great to Pray
Thursday	Great to Pray	Grace Before Meals	Traditional prayers / focus child	Whole school assembly
Friday	Class mass	Grace Before Meals	Great to Pray	Night Prayer

Example 2:

Year group:	Morning	Lunchtime	After lunch / pm	Pm / End of day
Monday	Mark 10 Mission	Grace Before Meals	Traditional prayers / focus child	Night Prayer
Tuesday	Traditional prayers / focus child	Grace Before Meals	Great to Pray	Night Prayer
Wednesday	Great to Pray	Grace Before Meals	Traditional prayers / focus child	Whole class collective worship
Thursday	Traditional prayers / focus child	Grace Before Meals	Traditional prayers / focus child	Hymn Practice
Friday	Child-initiated collective worship	Grace Before Meals	Great to Pray	Night Prayer

Example 3:

Year group:	Morning	Lunchtime	After lunch / pm	End of day
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Monday	Whole class collective worship	Grace Before Meals	Traditional prayers / focus child	Night Prayer
Tuesday	Great to Pray	Grace Before Meals	Child-initiated collective worship (planned & delivered together)	Night Prayer
Wednesday	Traditional prayers / focus child	Grace Before Meals	Great to Pray	Night Prayer
Thursday	Traditional prayers / focus child	Grace Before Meals	Hymn Practice	Night Prayer
Friday	Great to Pray	Grace Before Meals	Traditional prayers / focus child	Night Prayer