

English Martyrs Catholic Voluntary Academy Collective Worship Policy



Adopted: November 2020

Review: November 2022



“ We learn and grow as a family following in the footsteps of Jesus “

The Nature of Collective Worship

We believe that Collective Worship in the life of our academy 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.

- Through **WORK**, to develop our full potential as part of the community and as a unique person made in the image and likeness of God.
- Through **WORSHIP**, to learn to know and love God and to recognise and respond to the person of Christ in others.
- Through **WITNESS**, to celebrate Gospel messages of justice and peace.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

Worship in English Martyrs Academy is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

Collective Worship and assembly are two distinct activities and may sometimes form part of the same gathering but the differences between the two will always be made clear. 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.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

The Aims of Collective Worship

We believe that Collective Worship in our academy aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore their own beliefs
- To respond to and celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully in the liturgical calendar of the church
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.' To give thanks to God, to listen to Him, to ask for and receive forgiveness, to place our own needs and the needs of others into his hands.

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Develop in children skills that enable them to plan, prepare, organise and lead worship.
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the church.

In order to do this, celebrations will:

- be kept small wherever possible or appropriate to help to personalise the experience;
- be short and appropriately paced
- be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.
- a sacred space will be created as a focal point, music, lighting etc will be used to remind us of the presence of God.
- the word of God through scripture will be given prominence.

The Planning, Delivery and Evaluation of Collective Worship.

We follow a structure which references the church's seasons, Come and See, significant dates and the curriculum.

We respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.

When preparing an act of worship, a focus is created and we consider which resources will be most supportive.

We plan the following elements:

Gather: How we will create an atmosphere of prayer and how will we begin?

Word: What will the scripture focus be and how will we present it?

Response: What will we do in response to listening to God's Word eg a prayer and symbolic action.

Mission: What will I do to help the pupils take the message away with them?

Collective worship in our school takes place daily and at various times.

All children in the school meet daily to worship together with a different focus each day. Each class finishes the day with reflection and class prayers and all classes pray together at lunchtime.

Liturgies and Mass are celebrated at various times during the year eg start / end of the year Mass, Advent, Ash Wednesday, Lenten Liturgy, Easter Celebration, English Martyrs Day and days of obligation. Mass will take place either in church or in school. We invite the parish into school as much as possible to participate in collective worship and once a term Father holds the parish Mass at school. Year groups take turns to plan and deliver the Mass alongside Father.

Statements of the week are used by the children as starting points for weekly child led liturgies. All children in the school are involved in planning and delivering these weekly liturgies. Other children who form the audience for the liturgies will evaluate and evidence is put into class liturgy books.

Wherever possible we involve our parents and families in collective worship. They are encouraged to comment on and evaluate identified collective worships eg whole school Masses and liturgies. Our weekly newsletter and website records significant collective worship experiences to further involve parents, parish and the wider community.

Role of the Chaplain

The chaplain in school is responsible for coordinating and planning much of the collective worship which may include whole school, class and small group collective worship. They liaise closely with other chaplains in the diocese as well as the outreach team based at the Briars for up to date and inspirational ideas. The chaplain is also responsible for supporting other staff in the delivery of collective worship where necessary.

Our mini chaplains made up of KS2 children are led by the school chaplain, they meet weekly to decide on activities, prayer and liturgies connected to the liturgical year and statements of the week.

Prayer

Prayer is an integral part of school life at English Martyrs Academy and is not separated from the rest of school life; therefore children who belong to the school will share in the prayer life of the school. Children have a natural aptitude for prayer and are open to God. They respond in many ways to the word around them and their school life is full of endless exploration and discovery.

Teachers create an environment where these responses are developed as the beginnings of prayer. Each classroom has a visible and special prayer space which reflects the current topic or the liturgical season. These spaces are to support children in their communication with God.

Words for Prayer

Children are taught that prayer can be an everyday way of praising, thanking, asking and saying sorry. Children are taught to use prayer to ask for God's help in times of difficulty eg if

somebody is sick or dying. Over time children learn formal prayers. Every class uses a book of age appropriate prayers suggested in the Curriculum Directory and documented in the staff handbook. These are kept in the classroom's prayer space. Prayers are learnt by:
Children hearing and joining in with them.
Singing them.
Through topics linked to particular prayers.

Recording

Collective Worship is recorded :

- On a liturgy planner to keep notes of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources.
- Through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs and videos etc

Resources

Resources are stored centrally and in classrooms. There are also resources stored in the RE cupboard.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the RE subject leader and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors and, in particular the RE Governor play a most important role in the monitoring of Collective Worship. The policy is also regularly monitored through feedback from pupils, parents, staff and parishioners.