



Newman Catholic School

Collective Acts of Worship Policy

“I have come that you may have life and have it to the full”

John 10¹⁰

Mission Statement

Our mission is to educate our students in the wholeness of mind, body and spirit through the teachings of Jesus Christ as proclaimed by the Catholic Church by placing Him at the center of students' lives.

Our school commits itself to the principles of Catholic education and academic excellence, leading our students from shadows and images to the fullness of the Truth, as envisioned by the Blessed John Henry Newman. The school community recognises that excellence in education can best be achieved, and future leaders nurtured, within a living tradition rooted in the Love and Truth of Christ.

We encourage students to cultivate Christian virtue and an appropriate sense of social responsibility.

We inspire an enthusiasm for life-long learning and are committed to success for all.

Next Revision Date: Spring 2021

COLLECTIVE ACTS OF WORSHIP POLICY

Introduction

The school aims to provide an outstanding whole person education through which all are challenged to grow in wisdom, understanding, self-esteem and closeness to God. We achieve this through collective worship by ensuring that our school is a place where prayer and reflection are embedded throughout school life for both staff and pupils. Worship, prayer and liturgy are integral parts of the Catholic tradition and therefore they are central to our school, community and its character. This is expressed through opportunities for prayer and reflection (both privately and as a community), through assemblies, and through liturgies (sacramental and non-sacramental). Our worship as a Catholic school is integral to who we are and what we want to achieve.

We seek to actively encourage the whole school community (pupils and staff) to share in the liturgical life of the Church and in so doing:

"promote and develop an appreciation of, and a more active involvement in prayer, worship and liturgy". (Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School)

All pupils will experience prayer in a variety of forms throughout their school life. Many of the occasions will be voluntary, although pupils will be encouraged to participate through word and action. Each pupil will have opportunities to pray and reflect daily e.g. collective worship in class or tutor rooms, whole school prayer, weekly mass and year group assemblies. The whole school community is invited to reflect on personal, social and global issues and consider its responses to them.

We believe:

- Our daily Collective Worship is an entitlement for all members of our community. It is their right to have daily opportunities for prayer and reflection.
- Our worship as a Catholic school meets the expected legal requirements but more importantly it is central to our Catholic education and forms an essential part of our school's overall provision for prayer and worship.
- As a Catholic school, whilst respecting the diversity of belief and commitment, our worship must be Catholic in character, reflecting the liturgical tradition of the Church and having Christ at its heart.
- A variety of experiences must be provided to all members of our community, influenced by students, staff and visitors, such as: quiet reflection, silence, prayers, responses, music, songs, dance, drama, slides, video excerpts, Bible readings, short addresses.
- An appropriate, respectful atmosphere with a sense of order and occasion must be present during worship, including on entry and exit to liturgy.
- We respond to the issues of the day and people within our local and global community as well as to the liturgical calendar.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AT NEWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Collective worship is based on The Way. Please refer to The Way guidance provided to all staff as to how to deliver the programme. Throughout the year staff and students will be invited to regular masses led by our school chaplain. Details are found on the staff bulletin. We have weekly mass on a Friday morning which everyone is welcome to attend.

MAIN PRINCIPLES - (Taken from *'Fit For Mission – Schools'*) **Worship/Liturgy**

- Sacraments and liturgy *'physically and spiritually incorporate us into the drama of God's plan of creation and salvation.'*
- We are asked to avoid a *'secular emphasis on the horizontal, pupil-centred dimension of personal and social reflection, to the exclusion of the vertical dimension of offering true and fitting worship that respects the dignity of God and the dignity of humanity.'*

- Worship is the action of Christ in which we participate
- Liturgy is a basic human need – we need ‘signs and symbols to express and perceive spiritual realities’
- *‘Liturgy is the action of the Church that uses rituals, symbols, music, drama, art and language to communicate the action of Christ, the word of God made flesh.’*
- Liturgy is about experiencing the ‘presence of God’
Liturgy is *‘always the celebration of the Church, united with Christ’* – it should follow the liturgical seasons

| Evaluation Criteria | Evaluation Strategy |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality, engaging and consistent collective worship provision • Worship in tune with the Church's seasons and significant dates whilst responsive to changing situations within the school and the wider community • Opportunities are provided for staff to develop high quality Collective Acts of Worship in a collaborative environment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termly observation by SLT • Annual pupil questionnaire and evaluation sample across year groups • Annual Staff Evaluation |

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring responsibilities

The School Chaplain will be responsible for ensuring monitoring of each tutor group on a termly basis as part of their Tutor Monitoring. SLT Tutor Monitoring will also monitor collective worship.

The Chaplain will be responsible for co-ordinating the annual student and staff evaluation of Collective Acts of Worship with the support of the Chaplaincy team and SLT.

Appendix A: General guidance for staff on Collective Worship.

Collective Worship can be a new experience for some students. An increasing majority of students have minimal or no relationship with the Church and can be heavily influenced by a culture that views all religion negatively or suspiciously. Meaningful prayer can be a new experience for some students and the role of the school is to encourage and guide them in this area. Prayer involves silent reflection which some students have little understanding of as their experience of silence can be extremely limited. Staff may also need support as they have varying degrees of knowledge, understanding, skills and comfortableness with prayer. This combined with a limited tutor time can lead to the risk of prayer being side-lined or treated in a tokenistic way.

Due to the large number of primary schools involved in Year 7 transition students have mixed experiences and are often unaware of the norms of prayer and liturgy. It is essential that prayer is part of the school routine and is consistently applied by all staff.

Worship should have four key elements:

1. *A ‘reverential milieu’ or prayerful atmosphere*
2. *Reference to the Scriptures (in tune with the Church’s year)*
3. *Opportunity to experience God’s presence (including through sign and symbol)*
4. *Participation (through word, action, listening, sharing)*

- In addition to this each collective act of worship should include a focus wherever possible, such as a candle or icon or items on a worship table.

Prayer: some general principles

- The Our Father is the model of prayer for all. It centres around a relationship with God as our Father, consideration of God's will and a desire to reflect on our sins and to seek forgiveness.
- Prayer is the *'raising of the mind and heart to God'*
- Prayer is fundamentally about relationship
- Prayer should always involve some experience of quiet/silence
- Meditation on the Word of God
- Popular piety – such as The Rosary and Stations of the Cross
- Memorisation of basic prayers
- Adoration
- Devotion to the Saints and martyrs

Good liturgy/worship should include the following

- Creation of a *'reverential milieu'*
- Active participation
- Full awareness of what we are doing
- The Word of God
- Beautiful music for praise, thanksgiving, contrition, adoration, intercession
- Religious art

Creating the 'space' for prayer

- The Sign of the Cross
- Religious artefacts such as candles, icons, images, crosses or items on a prayer table
- Projected visual images reflecting the theme or stimulating interest
- An invitation, during worship for student to reflect by closing their eyes or bowing their heads.
- The sign of the Cross
- A scripture reading (from the Student Planner)
- A quiet moment in which to think about this, with the aid of some questions
- Sharing of thoughts/ideas if students feel able
- Closing prayer/reflection
- The sign of the Cross

How the structure might be varied and developed

- The sign of the Cross – prayer might also be introduced with some words or suggestions such as: 'Let us pray', 'Let us take a moment to recognise God's presence', 'Let's bow our heads'
- If students are reluctant to share, it might just be necessary for the teacher to draw out some ideas for them and even on occasions to give them something to take away such as a prayer card.
- This could be quiet time, spontaneous shared prayer, prayers expressed through actions such as writing on paper leaves and putting them on a prayer tree, or just the joint praying of a familiar prayer such as The Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be
- The sign of the Cross or another formal closing of prayer such as The Grace or something written by members of the form.

Some suggested ways of encouraging prayer

- Pupils share the name of someone they would like to pray for (and possibly why)
- Pupils might share something that they have seen on the news that they would like to pray about
- Pupils give answers to a reflection question (e.g. 'whom do we admire?' Or 'Why do you think people bully others?').
- Pupils may also prefer to write their own prayers to incorporate into The Way.

Ways of creating silent reflective time

- Teachers could invite pupils to 'rest in God's presence' or 'know that God is with us'.
- Teachers could even get into the habit of beginning with the words of Jesus, "where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be among them."

Positive outcomes related to our Catholic ethos

- Development of understanding of faith and how it is lived out
- Development of positive attitudes such as gratitude
- Nurture of the ability to listen to others
- Encouragement to reflect on life and specific events to see God's hand in them , Enabling young people see all people as creations of God,
- Creating a willingness to help/serve others,
- Recognising the need for forgiveness and reconciliation.

