



Plymouth CAST

Collective Worship Policy

March 2021

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Produced by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	29.3.2019	Interim RE and Catholic Life Adviser	All Plymouth CAST schools	New Policy
2.0	26.2.2021	CEO	All Plymouth CAST schools	To reflect updates as part of the review cycle

Approvals

This policy requires the following approvals:

Board	Chair	CEO	Date Approved	Version	Date for Review
*			26.2.2021	2.0	March 2023

National/Local Policy

- This policy must be localised by Academies
- This policy must not be changed, it is a CAST/National Policy (only change logo, contact details and any yellow highlights)

Position with the Unions

Does the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement? **NO** If yes, the policy status is: Consulted and Approved Consulted and Not Approved Awaiting Consultation

Distribution

This draft document has been distributed to:

Position	Date	Version
Headteachers and governors of local governing boards	1 April 2019	1.0
Headteachers and governors of local governing boards	April 2021	2.0

Our Mission Statement

Our mission statement:

“Our mission is to be a community of outstanding schools in which our pupils flourish in safe, happy and stimulating environments and leave us with the knowledge and skills, personal qualities and aspirations, to make the world a better place, inspired by the Gospel.”

Our Values

The values which inspire our work and inform the ethos and decision-making in our schools are the values of the Gospel, based on the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 5: 1-11). These values are presented to the school community at assemblies and liturgies and explored throughout the working week in the classroom. When we come to celebrate achievement in the school, we recognise first and foremost those who have witnessed to Gospel values, as well as recognising excellence in other areas.

The Beatitudes, according to the Catechism, “...depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity.” In a very moving way, they sum up the essence of the transformed human being God calls us all to be in Jesus. These are the kind of persons and actions that are ‘blessed’ by God, this is the ‘job description’ of people living in God’s kingdom, as opposed to the world’s kingdom of selfishness, inequality, aggression, materialism and violence. They challenge each generation to reflect on what persons and actions they consider to be important or blessed.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

Gospel value: Humility, seeing life as a gift

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”

Gospel value: Compassion, empathy

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”

Gospel value: Kindness, gentleness

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied”

Gospel value: Justice, working for a fairer world

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy”

Gospel value: Forgiveness, reconciliation

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God”

Gospel value: Integrity, do what you say

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God”

Gospel value: Peace, committed to peacemaking, non-violence

“Blessed are those who are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”

Gospel value: Courage, standing up for truth

Our schools are invited to adopt this common set of Gospel values and integrate them into the liturgical life of the school. We will also look at ways in which we can incorporate these values in the curriculum itself, so that we offer an education to our children ‘in the light of the Gospel’.

The Nature of Collective Worship

In Plymouth CAST primary and secondary schools, we believe that Collective Worship is concerned with the praise and worship of God, to His greater glory. We recognise that these times of worship are an opportunity to gather, reflect, share and celebrate, in a safe and familiar environment, with people with whom we feel comfortable and ready, to explore our faith and successes. We understand our responsibility to give opportunity for all members of the school family to be spirituality nourished and the means to live out our CAST Vision on a daily basis.

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. These may take place within a whole-school celebration of liturgy or an assembly or within class groups. We understand that simply leading a prayer in an assembly does not fulfil a ‘worship’ requirement. By definition, Collective Worship means that there must be a gathering and this must be acknowledged by the leader. Moreover, the act of Worship must give pupils the opportunity to themselves worship, as well as a deeper understanding of what it is *to* worship. This is distinctly different to an assembly, whereby an idea is presented and information given (i.e. a class assembly).

Collective Worship may consist of following our understanding of a Liturgy: Gathering, Scripture, Action and Going Forth; as well as, prayer, meditation, song, drama, music, silence – and various other mediums. Worship as a group is any means by which those gathered may seek and find God.

The Place of Collective Worship in our Schools

Collective Worship goes beyond legal requirements and is rather, an opportunity for us to celebrate our school and our faith, as well as explore Catholic tradition – of which Collective Worship is a crucial aspect.

Prayer, reflection, worship and liturgical celebration are central to the Catholic tradition.... The worshipping nature of the school or college should be expressed in a variety of ways. Pupils should be assisted in exploring a range of methods of private, individual prayer, as well as group prayer in both formal and informal styles and settings. The celebration of the Eucharist (Mass) is the centre of worship for the Catholic community. There are also other forms of liturgy which have an educative value in themselves and help individuals to deepen their understanding of worship. All liturgical celebrations will aim to encourage the active participation of all concerned.”

(Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School, CES 1999)

In addition, we acknowledge and endorse the guidelines of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, that – even as a Catholic school – Collective Worship takes into account the needs of all pupils and, indeed, the faith and beliefs of all peoples:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community of The Church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of The Church
- Those from other Christian traditions
- Those from other faith backgrounds
- Those with Special Education Needs
- Consequently, Collective Worship will be accessible to all members of our school community.

The Aims of Collective Worship

We believe that Collective Worship in our school 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 positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To develop the necessary skills of: reverence; contemplation; reflection; interpretation; empathy; meditation – which enable our relationship with God to be deepened.
- To take time out ‘to wonder at’, ‘to come to terms with’ and ‘to give worth to.’

Definitions

Liturgy

Liturgy is a distinct format and formalising of worship that goes beyond prayer:

- Gathering (an acknowledgment of coming together as one people)
- Word (reading from the Scriptures)
- Action (children are given opportunity to act upon the Liturgy’s focus and the words of Scripture. This may be through prayer, song, dance or some other symbolic gesture)
- Going forth (the children are sent forth to live out what they have learnt and reflected upon this message).

Prayer

One of the early fathers of the Church described prayer as, “the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or requesting of good things from God.” These words of St John Damascene, now found in the catechism, illustrate why, as Catholic schools, we begin and end each session with a prayer. It is recognised as an essential aspect of any gathering together in school, whether this be whole school, in class or just staff.

Collective Worship

Collective Worship is, through words and actions, the way by which we enter a spiritual relationship with God our Father, by following the actions of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the opportunity for all within the school community to give glory to God.

We aim to engender an ethos of praise, worship and spirituality, providing all within our community the opportunity to create a deep and personal relationship with God; we understand that this comes in many forms and that there is no right or wrong way to find Him. Therefore, Collective Worship is an opportunity and invitation to find a connection with God through various mediums. We do this so that all within our care, be it in school, at home, or long after leaving our school family, have various means and ways to find God, whenever they wish to do so; or in fact, recognise His call, though not seeking Him themselves.

Organisation of Collective Worship

Whole School

A whole school Act of Worship takes place once a week using the Sunday Gospel. This may be led by any of the following: Headteacher; SLT; RE Leader; teaching or support staff; pupils; Chaplains. All staff are encouraged to lead and attend Collective Worship.

There will also be a celebration of song or prayer and praise liturgy during the week. This may include a variety of music preparation for singing in Mass. Our children and staff should wholly embrace the mantra “to sing is to pray twice.” (Saint Augustine)

Fridays are usually a time for celebration assemblies. Whilst this may not be formal Collective Worship, it is a time to emphasise school and CAST mission statements and Gospel Values, when we celebrate the gifts given to us by God and share these with each other.

In Class

Prayers are said at key intervals – morning, lunch, after lunch, and the end of the day – throughout the day, within each class.

When Collective Worship is not whole-school, teachers – and sometimes children – lead worship within class. This may take the form of: liturgy, lectio divina, meditation, music, prayer, etc. It is the opportunity for children to experience God in a new way, in the comfort of their classroom and classmates.

Mass

Some schools are fortunate to have Mass said in school, led by the parish priest, or to go to church for Mass. This gives pupils chance to further their catechesis in school, as well as celebrating the Eucharist; the centre of the Catholic faith. All children are invited to attend Mass, along with staff, parents and family, as well members of the parish community. The RE leader is responsible, along with the school chaplain, for liaising with the parish priest with regards the Scriptures, bidding prayers and hymns for Mass, which will be based on a theme, giving the children a strong focus and message.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of Collective Worship

Collective Worship is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the liturgical calendar, God Matters, significant dates, including days of Holy Obligation, Saint’s Days and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship.
- involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies.
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.
- to develop in pupils, skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a tokenistic way.

A typical Act of Worship should embrace the various forms of prayer – personal, intentional and communal – and have a theme or central point that is explored. This should be based on Sunday’s Gospel, a feast or Saint’s Day, a reference to an event in the church’s year or something topical based on school life. It should try to be reflective and sustain personal growth.

Collective Worship should follow the pattern or a variation of the pattern detailed below:-

- Gathering – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/reflective music, lighted candles, statues, sign of cross, focus and examination of conscience)
- Word- reading from the Scriptures (or another suitable source), breaking the word, time to reflect on this and prayers to fit the theme.
- Action – a ritual movement that everyone can join in with – that fits the theme (gestures such as holding hands, sign of peace, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc.

- Mission – the sending out from the celebration, -giving the children something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy so that they can take it into their daily lives.

Right of Withdrawal

We acknowledge that parents have a right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship. However in a Catholic School worship is integral to the life of the school and spontaneous acts of worship may take place in a variety of contexts other than those which are specifically structured.

Conclusion

Worship is not something separate from the rest of our school life. It reflects the way in which our pupils contribute and take responsibility for standards of behaviour, shared values, caring for each other, and quality of the school environment and also affirms the worth of the individual. We aim that the children in our care begin to realise that God is a source of infinite love, and that He is active in the world and in our lives. To realise that, by praying together as a community, God's love is reflected in all of us and most importantly, in school life will provide the atmosphere and opportunity to promote dialogue with Him.

Policy Monitoring and Review

Each school will have a named lead governor for RE and Catholic Life. This is a CAST Collective Worship Policy, which will be reviewed to ensure that the legal requirements are being met and opportunities for quality Collective Worship are being delivered.

The Board has overarching responsibility but we ask governors and those responsible to ensure that Collective Worship is up to date and in keeping with the social and moral principals of our ever-changing world, as well as the principles and practices of the Catholic Church.

This policy is monitored by the RE and Catholic Life Adviser and is evaluated and reviewed by the Board every two years.

The Leadership Report includes a review of the Catholic life of the school, this should be monitored by the LGB of the school.

The role of the LGB is to support and challenge the senior staff in the school to monitor:

- Time set aside for Collective Worship;
- Whether the observed practice is consistent with agreed policy;
- Whether Collective Worship is resourced in terms of materials, visual aids etc;
- Staff development on Collective Worship and its impact;
- Prayer focus and its effectiveness in drawing pupils into prayer;
- Impact on pupils and members of the school community;
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access worship and prayer;
- Records of themes and teachings of the Catholic Church covered in Collective Worship.

The RE Leader/Coordinator's Role

It is the coordinator's role to:

- Implement the policy for Collective Worship;
- Provide information, resources, examples and support for staff in their provision of Collective Worship;
- Help provide opportunities for spirituality for all members of the community;
- Observe Collective Worship in school and provide feedback to staff;
- Co-ordinate the planning and preparation for Mass, and other liturgies as the season dictates.

Helping Older Pupils to Plan an Act of Worship

Gather:

- What music might you play?
- How will you arrange the pupils?
- Will you light the candle(s)?
- Can you find an appropriate image, picture, poster/artefact for your prayer focus?

Listen:

- Who will read?
- What will you read? (Scripture, story, poem etc.)
- Will you act out the reading or use a PowerPoint presentation?

Respond:

- How will you help your friends to reflect on what they have read? Make sure you give some silent time.
- Will you say prayers that need a response?
- Who will lead the prayers?

Go Forth:

- What do you want your friends to take away from this Act of Worship to remember its message?

Helping Younger Pupils to Plan an Act of Worship

- **Choose a theme:** e.g. God gives me strength, Give praise to God, God's wonderful world, Love your neighbour, etc.

- **Something to look at:**

- **Something to listen to:**

- **Something to say:**

- **Something to do:**

- **Something to remember:**

Create resource theme boxes e.g. *Advent, Friendship, Our Wonderful World etc.*, for pupils to choose from and put a selection of appropriate pictures, songs, CDs, prayers, litanies, mantras, blessings, sacred objects, candles, readings, special book, Bible, stones, shells, cards, selection of activities, each on a separate card e.g. sign of peace, blessing with water, place a stone at the foot of a cross, etc. Let the pupils choose.

Planning sheet for an Act of Worship

It is sometimes helpful and practical to develop the same theme across a number of days

Theme:

Date:

Class/form:

Gathering:



Listen:



Response:



Going forth:

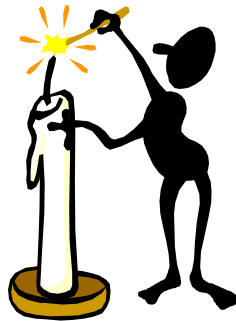


Good practice

- Where there is evidence of the planning and evaluation of provision
- Where there is a clear theme and message
- When opportunity is taken through the choice of themes for the pupils to become familiar with the traditions, customs and practice of the seasons and feasts of the Church and where topics relevant to pupils lives are reflected upon in the context of the Word of God and the teachings of the Church
- Where opportunity is given to reflect upon and to develop the values of 'community activity, exchange of greetings, capacity to listen, to seek and grant pardon, expression of gratitude, experience of symbolic action, a meal of friendship and festive celebration'. (General Catechetical Directory no. 25)
- When a 'sacred space' is created through a focal point, music etc.
- When Scripture is given prominence
- When opportunity is taken to use liturgical responses and actions
- When there is evidence of a variety of approaches, telling a story, describing a situation or event, using images, special objects, dance, drama, music etc.
- Where there is opportunity for individual and communal prayer in a variety of forms e.g. spontaneous, litany, intercession, meditation, traditional etc.
- Where pupils not only lead acts of worship but are skilled in preparing acts of worship
- Where the act of worship follows a liturgical structure, Gathering, Listen, Response, Going Forth
- Where it encourages thinking about the needs of others
- Where it affirms relationships and provides the opportunity for the collective sharing of joys and sorrows
- Where it helps to promote a common ethos and shared vision
- Where there is good use of visual aids, story, scripture etc.
- Where there is effective use made of music
- Where silence is used effectively to allow time for thought, prayer and reflection
- Language that is used is suitable for the age group
- There is a direct link between faith and everyday life
- The act of worship is separated from administration
- When gathering and leaving is conducted appropriately.
- Where the senses are engaged
- When the act of worship encourages thinking about the needs of others
- When it affirms relationships and provides opportunity for the collective sharing of joy and sorrow.
- When it is a learning experience but the focus is on worship and not on teaching
- Where adults are good role models
- When practical, that other adults/parents are invited to share (not simply observe) in the time of worship

Planning a Daily Act of Worship using a Liturgical Structure

Gather

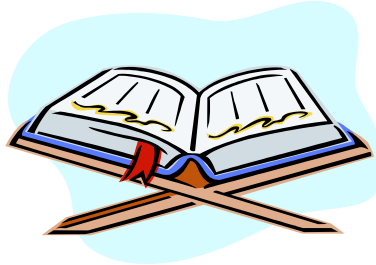


Prepare a sacred space: (images, words, music, and lighting to remind us of the presence of God.)

- Create a focal point to help pupils to focus during prayer using cloths, a projected image, photographs, painting, Book of the Gospels, crucifix, statue, rosary, lighted candle, special object, flowers etc. We can meet God in visual images and they can be a powerful catalyst for prayer. Remember quality and not quantity. Ask yourself, is it attractive, would it help me, is it relevant, does it reflect the theme, the liturgical year?).
- Use liturgical colours (green for ordinary time, purple for Advent and Lent, white/gold for Christmas and Easter, red for apostles, martyrs. Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Pentecost, white/blue for Our Lady)
- Use symbols of the season e.g. red poppy, autumn leaves, seas shells, and symbols of Baptism. God can be found in all things!
- Play reflective music – listen reflectively, use sign language, or sing as you gather
- Change the lighting to create a different atmosphere
- Light a candle – a sign of God’s presence and love
- Try various ways of gathering: into a circle e.g. one hand on shoulder in front/ various seating patterns e.g. theatre style, circle, semi circle, group, / Collect a class at a time/ Each class to bring their class candle or alternative symbol to a central display
- Repeat a line/ chant/ mantra e.g. joy, peace, love, Come Lord Jesus Come,(Advent) Peace on earth,(Christmas) I will follow you, (Lent) Jesus is risen, (Easter) Come Holy Spirit (Pentecost). A mantra is a holy word or phrase which is repeated often and can provide a precious moment of prayer.
- Make the sign of the cross
- Make the sign of the cross on the forehead, lips and heart – ‘May Jesus be in my mind, on my lips and in my heart’.
- Use breathing/ stilling routine – relax, concentrate on breathing. Breathe in God’s peace. Breathe out any worries. Be still inside and out
- Pass something round to hold attention
- Picking up a pebble, picture etc on the way in
- Sound i.e. triangle/Indian bell
- Create a circle by feeding a rope or using a hula hoop so everyone is connected then stands or sits.
- Sing ‘Come and join the circle’
- Sit in an outside space
- Contribute item to a display e.g. pebble, coin
- Set the scene

- Movement from silence/quiet to next stage
- Have a prayer board for prayer intentions. These intentions could be placed here at any time during a day and brought to the next time of prayer.
- Consider the class sending out an invitation to others to join them.

Listen



The Scriptures are a primary source of faith, a special sign of God's presence and should be given prominence.

- Listen to a reading from the New or Old Testament (Sometimes it is sufficient to present just a few sentences).
- ICT e.g. project a single image or a series of images to tell a story from the scriptures with key questions to consider: What do I see? What do I feel? What do I like?
- Prepare a PowerPoint of images and phrases with background music that makes the Scripture of the day relevant to the world we live in.
- Gospel Acclamation: Process and enthrone the Bible, elevate the Gospel, carry candles, stand to show respect, sing alleluia! '+Jesus be in my mind +on my lips + and in my heart'
- Mime the story as it is read
- Act out the story
- Sections narrated by pupils or 'part-speaking'
- Gospel story presented as a news report
- Use guided meditation. This is a way of praying with Scripture. Do a stilling exercise, invite the pupils to listen to the story and as they do to imagine they are someone in the story. What do they see, hear, did Jesus speak to them, what was he doing? etc.
- Ensure the reading has a message or theme
- Listen to reading on a tape
- Tell story in own words
- Create a 'visual story' (KETT) or read Gospel story and place pictures on a display
- Use same reading over the course of a week's worship
- Use pictures, images from 'God's Story'
- Use puppets to tell the story
- Use hymns and songs that tell the story
- Hot seat a character

Response



Remember that this is a special time to respond to the Word of God in prayer. Make sure that children are given quiet time to internalise the message and to respond within. If practical, consider using a symbolic action to express or accompany a prayerful response. Creative movement helps children to know that there are many ways to express praise, joy, sorrow, thanks, sadness, love. Avoid question and answer sessions or even a homily!

- Invite the children to talk silently to God about what they feel and what ideas they have. (If silence is difficult, play some quiet music in the background)
- Invite children to quietly in their hearts thank and praise God for his gifts
- Invite children to reflect upon the times when they remove themselves from God's presence, that they do not build up the kingdom of God. Ask for forgiveness and help.
- Pray for the needs of others
- In some circumstances, encourage spontaneous prayer. Encourage this as a circle time type of activity and pass a heart, a stone etc. around the circle
- Use a litany style prayer 'For... we thank you God'. 'For the times... We are sorry'.
- Use prayerful signs/gestures/actions to accompany a prayer, song
- Use a mantra, a word or phrase to repeat. Pupils can choose their own.
- Blessing with water or dipping the hands in water while music is played is a prayerful gesture
- Process with symbolic items
- Wash hands/feet
- Use traditional prayers. There are many that have been handed down through the history of the Catholic Church and it is important for pupils to take part in and become part of this tradition.
- Pass on a sign of peace
- Collective collage/artwork based on story e.g. Cotton wool balls stuck onto body of lamb, use collage to create a community garden etc.
- Plant seeds
- Place a stone at the foot of a cross
- Drop pebble in water
- Reflect and write on leaf and make a prayer tree.
- Light a candle
- Blessing with water/ oil
- Use touch e.g. hand on hand, shake hands, sign of peace, hold hands, link arms, clap hands
- On a large sheet of paper children could add their own paint stroke.
- Destroy papers (reconciliation)
- Sign language
- Breaking of bread
- Respond using clay, drawing, painting etc
- Private response diary/prayer journal
- Write personal prayers on post-its
- Use cut out shapes e.g. hearts, people, stars to write prayers on.
- Posters
- Dance

Going Forth



Here children come to reflect on what they would like to hold on to, to understand and express how faith is lived out in the school community, at home, in the parish, the local and wider community. They identify ways of applying faith to life.

- Request to do something linked with the word e.g. prayer, deed, to pass something on.
- Memento as a reminder e.g. card, shell, prayer, candle
- Mission through personal example i.e. forgiveness
- Spread the word (amongst others)
- Shake hands
- Ensure pupils follow through on what they are asked to do
- Words of commitment
- Reflect (at another time) on how their 'mission' has impacted on others.
- Find a few moments in the day to say thank you to God.
- Say a prayer for someone in need.
- Tell your mum/dad you love her/him
- Care for God's world by picking up a piece of litter
- Remember to say please and thank you
- Greet someone with a smile
- Do something helpful at home
- Invite someone lonely or isolated to join you at break time.
- 'Go forth!' Serve! Proclaim! Witness! Expectation!
- Make an internal promise
- Make a vocal promise
- Contribute to class book of ideas

Planning Checklist for a Daily Act of Worship

- **Theme:** **Date:**

Preparation: When, where, who, what? What resources will I need? Create a focus.

Gathering: How will we begin? How will I create an atmosphere of prayer?

Listen: What will be the scripture focus and decide how to present it.

Respond: What will we do in response to listening to God's Word e.g. prayer and symbolic action.

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

The Monitoring and Evaluation of a Daily Act of Worship

Date:

Year/Form Group/:

- Was the main emphasis on worshipping God?
- Have pupils been involved in the planning, preparation and leading of the act of worship?
- Was a 'sacred space' created using a prayer focus related to the theme, music, images, objects etc.?
- Were pupils actively involved in the worship?
- Was a variety of approaches used, e.g., story-telling, use of images, drama, music etc?
- Was a time of silence given for pupils to think, reflect and pray?
- Were the pupils respectful and reverent?
- Did the act of worship follow a liturgical structure, e.g., Gathering, Listen, Response, and Sending Forth?
- Was prominence given to the Scriptures as the Word of God?
- Was the language used suitable for the year group?
- Was the worship linked to everyday life e.g. joys and sorrows, a special event, world matters etc?
- Was the Church's liturgical year recognised and celebrated?
- Were the pupils encouraged to think about the needs of others?
- Were prayers from the Catholic heritage used?