



At Our Lady & St. Hubert's, home, school and parish work together, as we grow and learn, knowing God is with us in all we do.

Our Lady & St. Hubert's Collective **Worship Policy**

Our school mission statement underpins this policy and all its principles.

Aims:

Our aim is bring together the aspects of home, school and parish, to nurture in all our children a deep respect and relationship with prayer – seeing it as a meaningful, purposeful and desirable facet of our relationship with God.

Policy Objectives:

- To ensure this policy, its practice and its principles encourage strong relationships between home, school and parish, as well as allow the gift of prayer to be purposefully transferred and used between and in each place.
- To develop community spirit and to promote a common ethos and shared values.
- To enable children to reflect upon, develop a relationship with and celebrate the Word of God.
- To enable children to see prayer as a natural expression of their personal and developing relationship with God.
- To encourage and give opportunities for spontaneous prayer as a means of communicating with God and contextualising their internal thoughts and feelings.
- To know the traditional and formal prayers of the Church so that children understand them, their meaning and their use in our faith and lives. (Prayers such as The Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Glory Be, hail Mary, Acts of Contrition, Creeds and Gloria's – and to be able to recite them collectively).
- To give opportunities for silent reflection and to develop in children a sense of stillness leading to meditation.

The place of collective worship in the whole school policy:

The act of Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. It is a way of affirming our individuality and our communal belonging to the Body of Christ

Equal Opportunities:

All children are given an equal chance to join in collective worship according to their age and ability. At OLSH each day begins and ends with prayer. This is either in our school gatherings and assemblies (which happen consistently throughout the week) and in class. The main purpose of our school assemblies is to bring the school community or part of the school community together in Worship and Prayer. It is also to share the key messages from the weekly Gospel reading, themes for the week and aspects of the Catholic Pupil Profile Virtues/Values. Within each assembly there is always an opportunity for Prayer and Worship, and involves the children taking part in a variety of prayer experiences. Opportunities are provided for the children to participate in the celebration of year group and whole school Masses.

Collective worship at St. Hubert's takes place on a daily basis at the start of the day and generally follows the schedule below.

Monday – Whole school assembly with the headteacher - focusing on the gospel from the preceding day, focus on SIP "citizenship" theme or an important aspect of the Jesuit Pupil Profile.

Tuesday – Key Stage Collective worship sessions – hall timetabled for KS2 – KS1 and EYFS in classes.

Wednesday- Mass/Whole school prayer and reflection

Thursday – Singing and praise assembly

Friday- whole school assembly: AM – KS1 hall timetabled for collective worship. PM - Merit assembly based on citizenship theme, Jesuit Virtues, citizen of the week and acts of kindness "house points".

Where necessary to prepare for school and parish masses, whole school assembly may also include hymn and singing practice.

The aims of our assemblies and collective worship sessions focus on one of the following themes or aims:

- To recognise and acknowledge God's presence in all we do as outlined in our Mission Statement.
- To pray and worship together.
- To develop an understanding of the scriptures and how these relate to the way we live our lives
- To raise awareness of the world around us.
- To develop an understanding of and celebrate liturgical seasons, feasts and festivals including those from other cultures.
- To celebrate the success of groups and individuals.
- To share and increase knowledge.
- To display talents of individuals and groups.
- To develop a sense of awe and wonder.
- To develop children's personal, social, cultural, vocational and moral awareness including through discussion of termly citizenship themes

Whole school assemblies should generally follow the format outlined below:

Gathering

1. Enter and leave to music
2. Start with prayer, e.g. morning prayer, school prayer, other formal prayers.
3. An opportunity for reflection/personal prayer.
4. A greeting: unless prayer has taken place in staff briefing, teachers not leading the assembly should not leave before this stage.

Listening

5. There may be a story, a moral tale, work or drama by children.
The content/objective of this part of the assembly should be shared with staff at that morning's briefing.

Responding

6. The content of the assembly should be discussed and related to the daily lives of the children, now and in the future
7. This should be drawn together and concluded with a prayer and sometimes a hymn.

Mission/Going forth

8. The assembly concludes with a prayer asking for us to be strengthened in our mission to live as Christ in the world, trying to live out the message heard in today's liturgy/assembly

Where a class leads the whole school assembly, prayers may be at the end rather than the beginning of the assembly.

Classroom-based worship should consist of an opening prayer, an opportunity for reflection and a focus for the day.

Themes for assemblies should usually be linked with the term's citizenship theme or current world issues, saints' days or school ethos e.g. sustainability. One assembly of the week, usually Monday, will link with the previous Sunday's Gospel theme.

Masses are decided in consultation with the Parish Priest. Terms start and end with whole school Masses and in-between there will be class and phase Masses and services. Whole school Masses will be planned by the R.E. co-ordinator and led by children from different year groups. Class and phase Masses will be planned by the teachers concerned and, wherever accessible to the children, should draw on the readings of the day.

School-parish Masses will take place monthly during termtime, usually on the second Sunday of the month. Different classes will take responsibility for leading these on a rota basis. Where possible, preparation for

these masses should include classroom staff, pupils, priest and parents to enable full participation in the Mass.

Discussion should take place termly about opportunities to work with the parish priest and opportunities for reconciliation, adoration, participation in parish activities and celebrations etc.

Information on Prayer:

Why is prayer necessary?

Prayer is the foundation of Christian Life. Prayer is communication or communion with God. Through prayers we are drawn deeper into the life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself taught us the need for prayer. In Gethsemane as He prepared Himself for the climax of His life, Jesus received the strength He needed in prayer to His Father, "Abba Father Take this cup away from me, but let it be as you not I, would have it". At moments of His public ministry when those in need were pressing around Him, Jesus went off to a lonely place and prayed there.

What is Prayer?

We can pray anywhere and at any time. The **first step** is to place ourselves, as we are, in the presence of God. The **second step** in prayer is to pray. This means speaking to the Lord, asking Him for our needs and thanking Him for the many gifts He has given to us. This leads to praise and adoration. The **third step** is to be silent so the Lord Himself can guide the direction of our hearts.

How do we Pray? The best prayers are those that come from the heart. There are times however, when we find it almost "impossible" to pray: and then we need prayer books and the prayers we have learned by heart. Our children should have the opportunity to find out about and respond in a variety of ways to Jesus' example and teaching with regard to prayer. They should be encouraged to explore the different forms of prayer, and to be helped to grow in appreciation of the importance of prayer in sustaining a living relationship with God. Children's experience of prayer and worship in school, which for some of our children will be the only prayer experiences they will receive, will have a deep impact on their spiritual development as Christians, and a love of their Catholic heritage which they can take into their adult life. Their loves of Prayer Worship must be continually developed and fostered.

In prayer we become aware of God's presence with us and his love for us. We listen to Him in order to discover His will for us and to express to Him our gratitude, praise, love and adoration. We can foster the children's life of prayer by helping them become aware of God's presence in their lives and His love for them and by leading them to respond to Him in a manner appropriate to their age. Children learn to pray chiefly by sharing in the faith and prayer of adult Christians, especially parents, priests and teachers. Therefore we believe that we should go a step beyond teaching them prayers, we should pray with them in their presence. We should encourage them to pray by themselves, especially in the morning and at night. There are many ways of helping the children meet God Our Father in prayer:

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| • Prayers of silence | • Own prayer |
| • Spontaneous prayer | • Prayers through own gestures and actions |
| • Prayers of the Church | • Prayers through music and song |

Prayers of Silence:

The help the children participate in a prayerful silence, we can use various ways of focussing their minds on prayer. We can ask them to concentrate on an object, a picture, a lighted candle, some quiet background music or by giving them guidance about what to think: "Let's think about

Spontaneous Prayer:

Once we have begun it is often difficult to stop children praying spontaneously. The children may not be able to express their thoughts accurately at first, and may they may initially be shy or embarrassed. Many

of their prayers may be prayers of petition for a sick parent, grandparent or friend. At St Gregory's we try to encourage them to pray not only for what they want, but also to pray that things will turn out as God knows best. We also encourage the children to express thanksgiving, love and praise to God the Father in their spontaneous prayer.

Praying through gesture or action:

We encourage children to make even the simplest gestures thoughtfully so that the gesture or action is a prayer in itself. Gestures that the children will be taught as they move through the school will include: making the Sign of the Cross, joining their hands, offering the sign of peace, bowing their heads at the name of Jesus, genuflection, hands gestures, processions etc.

Formal/Traditional Prayers:

As the children move through school they will be taught and introduced to the commonly used prayers of the Church so that they are able to join in and participate in parish celebrations. We also have a school Prayer book that the children are encouraged to read and share. The introduction of many of the responses of the Holy Mass are incorporated into their classroom and assembly prayer and worship celebrations. Our aim is to help the children to develop a reverence and a positive attitude to praying.

Praying through Music and Song:

Listening to reflective music can create an atmosphere conducive to prayer and reflection. The singing of hymns can be so joyful. "Singing hymns is praying twice." Reflective music and singing are both used during prayer and worship sessions.

Assembly/Liturgy Planner

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| Date: | |
| Liturgical Season/Feast | |
| Key Stage/Year Groups | |

[When are we celebrating? Who will be celebrating? Where will we celebrating? Environment]

| | Resources/ Additional Information <i>[Which ministries are needed? What needs to be prepared?]</i> |
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| Gathering <i>[To become a gathered assembly. To prepare us to participate—to listen and respond]</i> | |
| Listening <i>[Participating in the Word of God (readings from scriptures, singing the psalms), is common to all Catholic worship.]</i> | |
| Responding <i>[Our response can be made up silence, reflection, prayer, symbolic action or song.]</i> | |
| Mission/Going Forth <i>[In our liturgical celebrations we offer praise to God; we are also strengthened in our mission to live as Christ in the world.]</i> | |