

In our school every day we learn, love and pray.

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Worship Policy

“A learning community, celebrating Christ in all, building a kingdom of love, hope and joy”

Mission Statement.

Aim

- To teach the children to respond to the divine requirement.

*“Adoration is the first act of the virtue of religion. God seeks worshippers in Spirit and in truth, and consequently living prayer that rises from the depths of the soul.”
(Catechism of the Catholic Church 2703)*

“The catechesis of children aims at teaching them to meditate on the Word of God in personal prayer, practising it in liturgical prayer and internalizing it at all times in order to bear fruit in a new life.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2688)

- To provide a Catholic Christian based education with God at the centre of all learning
- To create a strong, positive interaction between home, parish and school
- To provide an atmosphere where our Mission Statement is fulfilled and truly reflects the love of God.

Prayer

“Educating children to the experience of worship and liturgy must be seen as a gradual process which seeks to involve them actively in ways suited to their age and stage of personal, social and religious development”. (Directory of Children’s Masses)

Prayer reflects a personal relationship with God. It is necessary to cater for all children whatever background or stage in their faith development.

It is important to use music and silence to create the right atmosphere and setting. The children need to be led in meaningful experience of traditional prayers and be allowed time for silent prayer. Reflective skills are developed from the Reception class. The children are encouraged to pray with openness and spontaneity, reflecting life’s joys and sorrows.

All children take part in collective worship every day. Each class participates in a Celebration Assembly for the whole community including their parents on an annual basis.

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A prayer before meals is said in the classroom. A prayer at the beginning and end of the day is said in each classroom. Each class is encouraged to develop its own Prayer Book with both individual and shared prayers.

Whole school Masses are celebrated periodically throughout the year on special occasions and following the Church calendar.

Parents and visitors from the parish are invited and welcomed to join the children for Masses and special assemblies whenever possible. Sharing worship with the children is an opportunity to encourage them to be actively involved by means of language, music, mime and drama and to help them understand and take part in adult worship in their parish.

In school, displays to celebrate the children's achievements in RE and RE topic-linked displays are encouraged. Each class has its own Prayer Corner. Crucifixes, statues, pictures and posters are also in evidence throughout the school.

Class Worship and Prayer

In each class there is a designated area for Prayer as a Prayer Focus. Every day begins with a prayer, either in the classroom, or at an Act of Worship Assembly. Grace is said before lunch and prayers are said at the end of the afternoon classes.

The School Entrance Hall and the Discovery Den are focus areas which reflect the different aspects and colours of the Liturgical Year.

Music

'He who sings prays twice' (St Augustine). Music is an important aid to prayer, either to set the scene, to aid the mood or to raise our voices to God. Music can be used to listen to as well as to help create an atmosphere for worship and Reflection (see Music Policy). Silence is also important to allow time for thought and Reflection.

Acts of Worship

The whole school assembles on a Monday for Gospel Worship led by the Head/Deputy Head focusing on the Sunday Gospel. This worship includes the Medjugorje peace rosary.

Key Stage worship takes place on Tuesdays. Teachers and classes take turns to lead these following the planned rota.

On Wednesday there is a whole school Sing and Praise for the children led by an experienced musician and including scripture.

On Thursday there is a class Act of Worship led by the class teacher based on the liturgical year, half termly whole school values or current issues. Each week on Thursday one Key Stage 2 class visits St Edmund's Church to attend Mass with parishioners.

Each Friday there is a Gold Book Assembly when achievements are shared and celebrated.

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Throughout the year classes lead Act of Worship Assemblies and we aim to allow every child to participate in some way, using stories, poems, prayers, hymns and songs, art and movement. A variety of visual aids and religious objects and artefacts are available to support and illustrate the message of the day.

There are times in the year when we welcome visitors to our Act of Worship Assemblies. On occasion Acts of Worship are led by outside agencies such as, 'CAFOD', 'Mission Together' and people of other faiths.

Masses

Our Parish Priests celebrates Mass in school usually at the beginning and end of each term, on Holy Days of Obligation and on any special Feast Days during the term. Children prepare the readings and special prayers (penitential prayers and bidding prayers) for Masses and Liturgies and participate as fully as possible, by setting up the altar and preparing the hall or room for the celebration, proclaiming the readings and carrying the gifts in the Offertory Procession. Children who are Altar Servers in the parishes also assist the priest during Mass.

All Key Stage Two classes visit St Edmund's Church at least once a term to join with parishioners for Mass.

The Time for Collective Worship in our school is in addition to the time set aside for Religious Education.

Monitoring

A Key Stage One and Key Stage Two worship will be monitored each year by the RE Leader. An Assembly Record Book is kept to record the themes and assembly content. The content of all whole school Gospel Worship is recorded in a file stored in the head teacher's office.

Special Needs

Children are involved in our Acts of Worship whatever their abilities. We recognise that there are varying levels of spiritual, moral and learning needs and we aim to differentiate accordingly. Adults also attend and take part in Acts of Worship.

Equal Opportunities

During Acts of Worship there is thought for the needs of others. The variety in focus for our Acts of Worship, be it an assembly or class prayer time, includes an awareness of other faiths and culture throughout the course of the year.

Policy reviewed **November 2016**

Policy reviewed **March 2019**

Next review date **March 2022**

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APPENDIX I: Collective Worship Guidelines

These guidelines are designed to assist teachers when planning collective worship either in class or for larger assemblies in the hall.

The following should be regarded as elements of the Act of Worship, whether within assembly or class prayer times. There is no single correct order.

- A **gathering** or 'stilling' (calming down) time, either silently or accompanied by appropriate music. This time is important to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer.
- A **focal point**: a prayer table and cloth/drapes (according to the liturgical season. (Purple in lent and advent, green for the ordinary times), a candle or other significant objects E.g. a bible, small crucifix an icon or picture. The table should be for this purpose alone, and should be kept looking special. A few things tastefully arranged looks better than too much clutter. Encourage the children to regard it with respect and reverence.
- **Lighting the candle**: signals the beginning of the act of worship. Before this, ensure the children are quiet and ready, facing the focal point, aware that this moment requires appropriate behaviour /responses. Try to make the lighting a moment of significance; it should be done in an unhurried dignified way. Once the candle is lit, all begin with the sign of the Cross. Check children know how to do this properly.
- A **reading**, usually from the Bible; it need not last long. A short passage is often more effective. Choose a retelling appropriate to the children's age though a real Bible should also be used from time to time and frequently with the older children. Hold the book aloft while the reading is introduced. Explain the choice of reading.
- A **time for reflection**: usually after the reading, though it can be at other times. (See below) This can be guided or through question and answer. Children should be trained to become self-reflective and encouraged to make the links between the prayer and their own lives.
- **Prayer**: spoken and/or silent. This includes taught as well as spontaneous prayers. Children will need guidance about spontaneous prayer; if they are not used to it or find it difficult, the teacher could ask the child to identify the focus of the prayer, then 'model' the words. Assemblies or liturgies provide numerous examples of prayer formats where children and adults learn ways of praying aloud and in silence.
- Silence, music, drama and mime or pictures: (E.g. on PowerPoint) can be used to enhance prayer/reflection at any time.
- Conclude with **the sign of the cross**.

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APPENDIX II: Different Stages of Prayer

Children should be made aware and experience the different forms of prayer:

1. Adoration: All prayer should begin with praising God for his creation; the psalms are wonderful expressions of this.
2. Confession: We need to say sorry (Often in the silence of our hearts) and ask for forgiveness. There are many good prayers that can be taught. From Year 3 the link between this prayer and the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be made explicit.
3. Thanksgiving: We should encourage children to thank God for their gifts e.g. parents, family, friends, health, skills talents as well as those things we so easily take for granted – food, water, clothing, shelter.
4. Supplication (asking): We ask God for so many things it may help to focus on the purpose of the asking, which ultimately is that God's will be done. It is important that we ask for God's forgiveness for our wrong doing (sin). It can be a good opportunity for children to think of the needs of others, especially those who are ill and those in need in other countries (link to CAFOD), but be careful not to let this become an endless list of requests, especially when children start to include their pets!

The RE Leader will provide further advice to any teacher who requests it.