

# St John Plessington Catholic College

## Collective Worship Policy

"The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who provide future generations with reasons for living and hoping."  
*(Gaudium et Spes)*

### Introduction

#### What do we mean by liturgy?

"Full conscious and active participation" in liturgy is what the Church desires for all the faithful.  
*(Sacrosanctum Concilium 2 .14).*

As members of our community at St John Plessington Catholic College we must strive to bring this about in all that we undertake.

#### Where do we begin?

Jesus began with a bowl of water and a towel, he washed the feet of the disciples. He began with the bread and the wine when he shared a meal with them. We must begin in the same way, with the stuff of everyday life, with everyday human actions and values: doing things as groups, greeting and welcoming, listening, thanking, asking for forgiveness, sharing, marking special occasions, experiencing symbolic actions.

Liturgy is fundamental in holding us together as a community, it is the way in which we express our beliefs, it forms us as a community.

In liturgy everything in our lives, everything that makes up our lives is gathered into God and blessed, even our sin draws God to us, to forgive us.

At St John Plessington Catholic College we believe that liturgy is not just "the icing on the cake" it is not superimposed, it is already there, woven through the very fabric of our lives. What we are trying to do is to be more aware of God's blessing in our lives, God's work in our lives, and celebrate it. In liturgy, we who have been baptised are called to share in the priesthood of Christ, who has given us the example that we must copy.

Jesus showed us perfect love by getting up from the table, and kneeling at the feet of his disciples and washing them. This is what liturgy is all about, perfect love.

## **1. Responsibility**

Worship is legally the responsibility of the Governing Body. In practice at St John Plessington Catholic

College it is the Leadership Team, link Governor, along with the Head of RE College Chaplain and the

Religious Education Department who will support the collective worship within the college.

All staff appointed at the school are expected to support the ethos of the school and contribute

effectively to collective worship.

## **2. Quality of Liturgy and Celebration**

It is paramount that the students are given well planned and meaningful liturgy, as this may be

the only opportunity that they have to participate and reflect on their own faith.

On a day to day level staff are provided with resources to assist them in prayer with their form

group. The "Theme of the Week" resources are very beneficial for tutors to use during Acts of

Worship which take place during Academic Review.

At special times, for example on Holocaust Memorial Day the form tutor may be given a more

developed reflection to use with their class.

Staff are aware that the College Chaplain and Religious Education Department have resources to use

in assemblies.

The College Chaplain along with the Head of RE, RE Department and Performing Arts Department

plan reflections, services and Masses that take place at different times during the college year.

Students and other teaching staff are actively encouraged to assist in the planning of liturgy and to

participate whenever possible.

Our key moments of reflection and celebration are as follows:

- Advent Reflections for each student which take place in the College Chapel
- Christmas Carol Service
- Lent Reflections for each student which takes place in the College Chapel
- Ash Wednesday Liturgies for each year group.
- Holy week Liturgies for each year group.
- Year 7 Mass of Welcome
- Year 11 Transition Liturgy
- Year 13 Leavers' liturgy

Liturgies provide both students and staff an opportunity to take a full and active role in the liturgical

life of the college community.

### **3. The celebration of The Eucharist**

We understand that some staff and students are not familiar with the meaning and importance of the Eucharist as others. We are a Gospel community and an inclusive community where all are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Pope Francis reminds us: "A God who draws near out of love, walks with his people, and this walk comes to an unimaginable point. We could never have imagined that the same Lord would become one of us and walk with us, be present with us, present in his Church, present in the Eucharist, present in his word, present in the poor, he is present, walking with us. And this is closeness: the shepherd close to his flock, close to his sheep, whom he knows, one by one."

There is, therefore, a very close relation between "celebrating the Eucharist" and proclaiming Christ. To enter into communion with him is to become missionaries of the event that the ritual realises

The best way that we have to help our community understand liturgy and particularly the liturgy of the Eucharist is to ensure that they have opportunities to experience the human values involved in the celebration of the Mass which naturally arise in everyday life:

- Helping others
- Working together
- Socialising together
- Giving and sharing
- Welcoming others
- Listening
- Saying sorry and Thank you
- Celebrating

The Eucharist is celebrated every Wednesday Lunchtime in the College Chapel when Students can either attend on a voluntary basis or as a part of the form group.

Year Seven students are also welcomed into our College Community with a Mass of Welcome, to which their parents/carers are invited to attend.

### **4. Daily worship**

Times of prayer are an integral part of the life of our college community, an act which unites each member of the community together.

Form tutors will guide, support and encourage their students to explore, discuss and pray about the wide range of topics that our Weekly Theme can bring about. The themes are based on the Sunday Gospel Readings of the Church's Liturgical Calendar.

All staff are provided with resources to assist them in praying with the students, however, one would encourage staff to consider reflection and prayer in other ways such as:

Students could listen to a reflective piece of music.  
There can be a focus for prayer such as an object for example a candle.  
Students should be encouraged to write and say their own prayers.  
A newspaper article can prompt a reflection

Students will also begin and end their day with prayer and at lunchtime will offer their thanks to God for the food that they are about to eat.

Providing opportunities for stillness and reflection and an ever deepening awareness of God are at the heart of what we are trying to achieve.

## **5. Assemblies/Collective Worship**

Firstly it is important that we distinguish between a meeting and collective worship. If a Year group is gathered for information/ notices this is a meeting, collective worship involves a gathering for worship.

At St John Plessington Catholic College we recognise the importance of celebrating achievements; the gathering of the Year Group is an ideal opportunity for a Head of Learning to discuss operation matters. There must be an obvious differentiation between notices and the start of worship from whoever is leading the assembly. Staff and Students who plan and deliver assemblies are encouraged to :

- Keep it as close to the theme they have been given as possible.
- To involve the students as much as possible in the planning and delivery of the collective worship.
- To allow the students opportunity for some quiet reflection during which they can make their own prayer to God.

## **6. Feast Days and Holy Days**

Will be marked where possible with a Liturgy. Additional resources will also be provided for use during the Daily Collective Act of Worship.

## **7. Staff Prayer**

During morning briefing staff will be led in prayer by our College Chaplain. Prayer brings us together as a worshipping community and gives us focus for the day ahead. We are able to share in joy and celebration as well as in times of sorrow or anxiety.

## **8 Display**

Display is important to reinforce messages that have been given to students during reflections and services. At other times in the academic year the liturgical calendar will provide inspiration for display.

## **9. Reflection and Evaluation**

It is the overall responsibility of governors, in consultation with the Head teacher, to ensure that the legal requirements are met and opportunities for quality collective worship are being delivered.

Those responsible will ensure that acts of worship are consistent with the beliefs, rites and practices of the Catholic Church.

The following will be monitored by the Leadership Team:

- 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 college community
- Opportunities for pupils to develop the necessary skills to access worship and prayer

## **10. Right of Withdrawal**

Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from worship and they are informed of this through the school prospectus.