



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and Nursery

We Live, Love and Learn with the Lord

Prayer and Collective Worship Policy

Worship and prayer form an essential part of the school day at St Joseph's, providing an opportunity to further develop a relationship between God and ourselves. As a Catholic school, it is fundamental to gather together to give thanks and praise to God.



Aims and purpose.

- To share our faith and our joy
- To provide an opportunity for the children and staff to worship God
- To enable children and staff to consider spiritual and moral issues
 - To enable children and staff to explore their own beliefs
 - To encourage participation and response
 - To develop in children a sense of community spirit
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes
 - To teach children how to lead others in worship
- To teach children to recognise and evaluate the impact of worship and liturgy

Introduction, context and statement of requirement

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework through which the school expresses its prayer and liturgical life. The governors recognise their responsibility to nurture and support the prayer and liturgical life of the children and the school community.

We recognise that young children have a natural aptitude for prayer and liturgy. They are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world around them. The prayer and liturgical life of the school will be celebrated collectively as well as individually, silently as well as in words, joyfully as well as solemnly.

We endorse the belief that prayer and liturgy take into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:

- Those who form part of the worshipping community in Church
- Those for whom school may be their first and only experience of Church
- Those from other Christian traditions – or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds

It will be an educational or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

“The celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.”

Marcus Stock (2012), *Christ at the Centre*, Catholic Truth Society, 23.

Statement of requirement

The law requires all maintained Catholic schools to provide an act of daily collective worship (prayer and liturgy) for all pupils (Section 70, 1988 Education Act) that is in accordance with the rites, practices, disciplines, and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, schedule 20 Instrument of Government, clause 2). Academies in England are required by their funding agreement and Articles of Association to comply with similar requirements (The Mainstream Academy and Free School: Supplemental Funding Agreement, December 2020; Model Articles for Catholic Academies, February 2019).

The law requires all maintained schools to recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children up to the age of 16 from prayer and liturgy (School Standards and Framework Act 1998, s.71(1A)).

The school's provision for prayer and liturgy will fulfil pupils' entitlement to experience the range of liturgical treasures of the Church, including a shared repertoire of prayers and liturgical music with which pupils in the school will be familiar.

Prayer and liturgy are not designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school, this means that times of prayer and liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education.

Principles

All Acts of Prayer and Liturgy in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character and in line with guidance for the Celebration of Masses
- Give children positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.

Prayer and Celebrations of the Word

Prayer is the 'lifting up of the heart and mind to God' which means it involves our whole person. As the time allotted prayer lengthens and the number of people involved grows, there is a corresponding need for more formal structures which give way to Celebrations of the Word. Celebrations of the Word are created by the school community and not taken directly from liturgical books of the Church. Celebrations of the Word may draw on elements of the liturgy (texts, symbols, gestures) which help to reinforce their Catholic nature, but they can be used with greater creative freedom than the liturgy itself. These celebrations can take many forms but the common element is the proclamation of Scripture - the Word of God.

Liturgy

The most familiar form of the liturgy celebrated in school are the Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A set structure is to be followed with certain words spoken, gestures to be performed and symbols to be used as stated in the Roman Missal and the Lectionary.

Different types of Prayer and Liturgy

There are many different types of Prayer and Liturgy which children will experience:

- Private Prayer – to pray alone. This is very important as it is a time when we can personally connect with God.
- Public Prayer – to pray with others. This is when more than one person participates in prayer together.
- Meditation – this could be based on a scripture passage, on art or music, or on a word/phrase.
- Traditional set prayers – these will include prayers of intercession to Mary, to saints and to angels
- Speaking to God – through own "made up" composed prayers by the children and as ongoing/momentary conversation/speaking to God
- Celebrations of the Word - Gather, Word, Respond and Send
- Singing Liturgies
- Use of the Prayer Garden
- Services of Reconciliation
- The Celebration of Mass
- Sacramental Celebrations - First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation

Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORD

Celebrations of the Word are planned:

- Following a structure (Gather, Word, Respond & Send) with reference to the Church's seasons, significant dates (e.g. Feast days), Virtues and the curriculum.

Scripture will be the focus 'word' in all Celebrations of the Word.

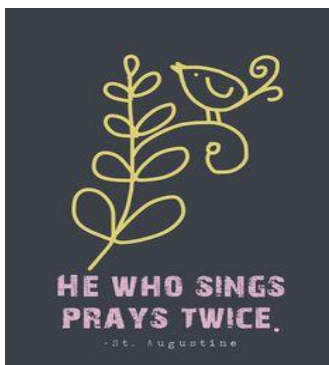
- Involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies.
- With flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community.
- To develop in children's skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead Celebrations of the Word rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

Celebrations of the Word at St Joseph's:

- Monday - Whole School Virtues Celebration of the Word
 - Tuesday - Whole School Singing Worship
 - Wednesday - Whole School Child-Led Worship
- Wednesday - Mass (each class attends fortnightly), 10am
 - Thursday - Whole School Guided Meditation
 - Friday - Class child-led Worship – in classes

Pupil leadership in Celebration of the Word will increase as the child progresses through the school. Within class and key stage celebrations, we follow a staged progression to ensure pupils gain confidence in leading and contributing to Celebrations of the Word in an age-appropriate way. This is shown as a progression grid below (Appendix A)

Involvement in Key Stage and Whole School Celebrations of the Word will vary according to the purpose and celebration but children will be involved as and when appropriate.



As St Augustine taught us, we believe singing is a way to pray twice. As such, we encourage our children to sing praise to God throughout many of our daily acts of worship.

We have a weekly whole-school singing liturgy, dedicated to worshipping God through song, and teaching the children both traditional and contemporary liturgical hymns and songs.

ANNUAL LITURGICAL PLAN OF PROVISION

A plan of liturgical provision is produced each year in consultation with the Parish Priest. This outlines all liturgical celebrations that will take place during the year both in school and in Church. This includes any Sunday Masses animated by the school, plans for Holy Days of Obligation, school Masses to mark the starts and ends of the school year and all plans for Sacramental Preparation.

Mass



The children participate in the celebration of the Mass fortnightly, visiting St Joseph's church for this. The masses are celebrated with the Parish community. Children are encouraged to sometimes play an active part in the mass including reading, serving and leading music. Sufficient time is taken to prepare the children for the mass, both in terms of practice and understanding. Staff are provided with material detailing a systematic approach to teaching the responses and parts of the mass.

The Mini Vinnies lead and attend special liturgies and organise and lead fundraising events in school. As a school community, we participate in fundraising, either collaborating with the parish or from the Mini Vinnies suggestions.

Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the annual budget allocation and available resources, including staff time, chaplaincy provision, and dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy. The Catholic character of the school is reflected in religious artefacts and images on display throughout the building. Dedicated spaces for prayer and liturgy will be furnished and maintained as such, and updated to reflect the Church's liturgical season. Staff training and formation costs will be funded separately to ensure that all staff are able to fulfil their responsibility to contribute to the prayer and liturgical life of the school.

Focal Points of Prayer

We use our classroom focal points as an aid to prayer. There are focal prayer stations around school, appropriate to the liturgical season of the year and incorporating the correct liturgical colour. These include drapes, candles, artefacts and the written word.

We have an outdoor prayer garden, for both adult-planned and spontaneous, child-led prayer and reflection.



Training and formation

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

Responsibility

Governance

The Academy Council, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is a named person(s) who is responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school (the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator)
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

Headteacher

The headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school.

Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school and therefore are in line with the guidance set out by the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- there is an Annual Plan of Provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations, as well as opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments
- there is daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability, as outlined in the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*
- pupils are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and pupils
- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feed back into planning for future liturgies
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- there is collaboration with local clergy and parishes
- liaison with the Diocesan Advisory Service and others is maintained to ensure they keep updated with best practice.

Equal Opportunities

A policy for equal opportunities exists and is followed in the school. All children will be given the same opportunity to take part in the prayer life of the school.

Family Engagement

A copy of all the prayers to be taught in school will be made available to all families (on paper request and through the school website) so that they can reinforce the use of these prayers at home.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy will take place regularly, and at least annually, and involve all key stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, clergy, and governors. Areas for development will be identified and issues raised will be actioned and evidenced as appropriate.

Appendix A

St Joseph's Pupil Participation Progression Document for Collective Worship:

Phase	Collective Worship	Faith Practice
EYFS	• Experience a regular, simple structure for collective worship • Begin to name the elements of the liturgical focus which is present in their classroom such as; Bible, candle etc • Choose people and things they want to pray for at appropriate times in the liturgy or class prayer time. • Begin to place items on the liturgical focus under the direction of an adult.	• Make and say the sign of the cross • Say our morning prayer • Recognise Jesus on the cross • Join in a simple formal prayer and say thank you to God • Talk about the Christmas and Easter stories • Begin to recognise the 'Our Father', 'Hail Mary' and the prayers of the Rosary • Prayer response: bidding prayer response
KS1	• Set up the focus for class prayer, choosing items from a given set of resources, and be able to explain why they have chosen each item. • Finish a prayer, given the first part e.g. Thank you, God, for ... • Begin to choose items on the liturgical focus, with suggestions from an adult. • Write their own simple prayers for inclusion in the liturgy. • Occasionally, lead by reading a simple text or by choosing an appropriate hymn, with guidance.	• Say the school's daily prayers • Recognise Mary from a painting and know who she is • Retell the Christmas and Easter stories • Say sorry to God • Use their own words to pray for others • Sit quietly and think about Jesus • Begin to join in with saying 'The Our Father', 'The Hail Mary' and the Rosary'
Lower KS2	• Write and read their own prayers in different liturgies, with appropriate guidance from the teacher. • Read the Bible readings during different liturgies • Choose from a selection of readings provided for the 'Word' • Choose a 'going forth' (or 'witness') • Begin to develop skills to share the Word, using a wider range of ideas e.g. reflection, poetry, dance, drama, art.	• Say the 'Hail Mary', 'Our Father' • Recognise the 'Glory Be' • Participate in the Rosary • Lead class prayers • Know how to join in with the bidding prayers • Ask known saints to pray for us • Recognise some of the responses at Mass, e.g. 'I confess' • Sign forehead, lips and heart to greet the Gospel • Know when to genuflect
Upper KS2	• Plan and lead a liturgy appropriate to another class, with guidance where necessary. • Select from a range of resources which relate to the whole liturgical year to set up an appropriate focus for a particular theme. Some guidance should be offered. • Select elements that promote a spiritual atmosphere e.g. music at the beginning and end of a liturgy. • Choose appropriate readings, with guidance where needed. • Choose songs appropriate to the theme, from a wider selection. • Include traditional prayers as well as their own prayers. • Use a variety of prayer types such as meditation, liturgical dance and music.	• Know most Mass responses • Take part in periods of quiet stillness and thought • Know that Jesus is truly present in Holy Communion • Receive Jesus with respect (if sacrament made) • Respond to simple psalm prayers and blessings • Write own bidding prayers • Begin to lead the prayer of the Rosary with others • Organise a simple Act of Class Worship



Headteacher: Mrs E Ronicle

RE Lead: Mrs E Ronicle / Miss Savelli / Mrs Harrison

BWCAT Executive Headteacher for Catholic Life: Mr Chris Power

Catholic Life Link Governor: Mary-Jane Murray

Reviewed: June 2026

Signed (headteacher)  Mrs E Ronicle

Signed (chair)  Deborah Welch

Review due: June 2027