

# PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

## MISSION STATEMENT

To follow in Jesus' footsteps, caring for each other when we work, play and pray.

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At the heart of the Church's very being is the mission to teach. Christ's own words to his disciples are addressed to his Church today:

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

*Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time".*

*(Matthew 28: 18-20)*

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We see St Joseph's school as having an integral role in fulfilling this command of Jesus, our Lord. Prayer and Liturgy in our school is an essential part of our ethos, aims and relationships: Catholic values permeate all aspects of school life and all relationships. It is a way of deepening our relationship with God together and individually. Through the many forms this worship takes, we grow in spiritual, moral and liturgical understanding. We allow ourselves to grow in understanding of our living faith tradition and then develop a sense of wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ. It is through Prayer and Liturgy that we share each other's faith experiences and learn the skills of prayer and reflection. With God's help, we will educate our children to live safely and responsibly, to care for His wonderful creation and to live their lives through the example of Jesus and the values of the Gospel.

## THE AIMS OF PRAYER AND LITURGY AT ST. JOSEPH'S:

To provide all pupils with active opportunities to respond to and participate in Prayer and Liturgy:

- All staff actively promote and involve children in Prayer and Liturgy, ensuring genuine enthusiasm, which is evidenced in the reverence of the act.
- All staff pro-actively facilitate pupils leading prayer services with a variety of resources accessible to children.
- Staff deliver reverent and faithful acts of Prayer and Liturgy.
- Leaders, at all levels, ensure that the Church's liturgical year/seasons and feasts are promoted appropriately.

To ensure that high quality Prayer and Liturgy is provided by our school:

- Staff ensure that meaningful times of prayer together is part of our daily experience at St. Joseph's. This includes all gatherings (e.g. in class, assemblies, governor meetings and staff meetings).
- All acts of Prayer and Liturgy have clear purpose/themes that reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical season and the Church's mission.
- Prayer and Liturgy is given highest possible priority.

For leaders and governors to promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Prayer and Liturgy

- Leaders deliver high quality Prayer and Liturgy and make it accessible to all pupils. They have an extensive understanding of the Church's liturgical year/seasons and feasts.
- Leaders are visible as models of outstanding practice around school.
- Monitoring takes place by leaders at all levels and feedback is shared with staff involved.

## AIMS OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

This policy aims to strengthen our School Mission Statement and ethos by enabling staff and children to know, understand and experience Catholic prayer and its significance in our lives today. It also aims to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to enable children/staff to independently plan liturgies.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

Collective worship is a legal daily requirement which is distinct from curriculum time. For Catholic schools this requirement is made explicit within the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham which states: "Religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from all or any part of Collective Worship, this withdrawal will be done in consideration to the CES guidance on withdrawing children from Collective Worship.

## **THE PLACE OF PRAYER AND LITURGY IN THE LIFE OF OUR SCHOOL**

We endorse the belief that Prayer and Liturgy takes 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; and
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement; it is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

## **PRAYER AND LITURGY IN OUR SCHOOL**

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response, in word and action, to God's invitation to enter into relationship with Him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer services take place in school daily: staff and pupils are encouraged to pray with thoughtfulness and with respect through a variety of prayer experiences (for example: whole school Masses and liturgies, assemblies and prayer services together with formal classroom and individual reflective prayer). This worship will follow the liturgical year and include appropriate feast days and thanksgiving Mass celebrations for the Sacramental classes in Year 3 and Year 6.

## **THE EUCHARIST**

Celebration of the Mass is central to the Spiritual development of every member of our community. All children are helped to experience the special closeness and presence of God, and we see each Mass as an opportunity to meet, speak to and hear from the Risen Lord, especially in the reception of Holy Communion.

All the children in school participate in the celebration of the Eucharist either through readings, bidding prayers, offertory processions, or singing. Each class takes an active lead across the year).

## **UNDERSTANDING OF THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR**

We ensure that pupils are aware of the Liturgical Calendar and key events in the Church. The symbolism of colours is made clear from the earliest days in our school: purple for penance (seen during Advent and Lent), red for Holy Spirit and martyrdom (seen at Pentecost), white, gold for important feasts and green for the ordinary times of the year. Some months of the year have special foci: October is the month of the Rosary, November is the month when the Holy Souls (the deceased) are prayed for, May is the month when Mary is especially remembered and June is the month of the Sacred Heart when we remember especially the great love Jesus has for us.

## **ASSEMBLIES**

- Gospel Prayers: Each week begins with a reflection on the Sunday Gospel. The whole school gathers in the Hall for an assembly led by the Principle.
- Virtues Prayers: Each Tuesday, the whole school gather to reflect on how we use the virtues to follow Jesus' footsteps following the Catholic Social Teachings (led by teaching staff on a rota system).
- Thanksgiving Prayers: On alternate Friday's, each Key Stage gathers celebrating the achievements (academic, sporting, spiritual, etc.) of the children and to reflect upon how we have tried to live out the Gospel message throughout the week.

## **VIRTUES**

Each half term, the children develop their understanding of two new virtues (as established in this form by the Jesuits) and strive to apply these to their everyday lives. The virtues are displayed in all classes and pictorial/symbolic images are on display in Foundation - Year 6 to support pupil understanding of the complex language.

## **FORMAL AND TRADITIONAL PRAYER**

Children are encouraged to develop their individual prayer life through daily participation in our formal prayers such as our school morning prayer, grace before and after meals and evening prayer. It is important that we enable pupils to participate in the community of the Church through learning our traditional Church prayers: each class teacher a copy of the prayers that their class are expected to learn by heart each year.

## **HYMN PRACTICE**

The children participate in hymn practices, where they learn Mass responses and sing both traditional and modern hymns. Music is an important part of worship in our school.

## **PRAYER ROOM/ PRAYER FOCUS AREAS**

We have dedicated prayer areas throughout the school. Each classroom has a prayer focus area to help pupils in their prayer life and is used in acts of class worship. It has reminders of liturgical themes/colours as well as class saints and inspiration figures.

There is also a prayer room for pupils to use outside of curriculum time. This area gives children the opportunity to spend time in private prayer.

## **VOCATIONAL LIFE**

Each class has a saint (as well as inspirational figures displayed around the prayer area) which can be used as a focus for our prayer and spiritual development.

## **PARISH LINKS**

Pupils and staff join the parish for Mass each Wednesday (4 classes each week). On the first Saturday of the month, families are encouraged to join the parish community for a family Mass. Families are encouraged to participate in the liturgy by reading or by carrying the gifts in the offertory procession. This is planned and run with support from the parish.

## **LINKS WITH PARENTS**

Liturgies, celebrations and events related to the Catholic Life of our school are shared in school newsletters. Parents and families are regularly invited to join the school community in Masses and our 'Gifts from God' assemblies. Parents of children in Sacramental year groups are also invited to Sacramental Meetings and Commitment Masses as part of the Sacramental Preparation.

## **THE PLANNING, CONTENT AND DELIVERY OF PRAYER AND LITURGY**

Prayer and Liturgy is planned:

- Following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship;
- Focusing on including the 'Gather', Listen', Respond' and 'Go Forth' elements to ensure that children understand the message shared through the act of prayer;
- To develop pupil's skills to enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Throughout the year, as part of the school's monitoring calendar, the school's provision of Prayer and Liturgy is evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of pupils and whether it truly reflects the aims and mission of the school. Learning walks for Prayer Services are carried out regularly by all leaders.

## **RESOURCES**

There are many resources available for planning Prayer Services. These are shared with all staff and are reviewed regularly as part of the RE Co-ordinator's monitoring role. There are several Internet sites that are also a useful resource for planning.

## **THE CO-ORDINATOR FOR PRAYER AND LITURGY**

The co-ordinator of Prayer and Liturgy is the school RE Leader. Although the Co-ordinator manages and plans for these occasions, different staff - through devolved leadership opportunities - lead and plan for Prayer and Liturgy.