

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy





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Each one of us has been created by God for a special purpose and is therefore uniquely special. Together we pray, grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School strives to be a positive force in the life of the Catholic Church by accepting individuals into a journey of living faith. Within the framework of the national education system, we are committed to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum, emphasising Religious Education, based on the attitudes and values to the Gospels.

Working in close partnership with the home and Holy Family Parish we aim to provide a welcoming, secure and happy Christian atmosphere in which the children can thrive, each developing their academic, emotional, physical and spiritual potential. We aim to provide for all members of our community a level of pastoral care and spiritual development fulfilling the highest ideals.

We believe that the prayer and worship life of our school community are central to all we do. Through liturgy and worship we aim to:

- Foster an understanding of what it means to belong to a community;
- Provide opportunities for enhancing spiritual growth and personal development through prayer and reflection;
- Encourage the development of a personal relationship with God;
- Provide experiences of sharing values and celebrating significant events in the lives of individuals and the community;
- develop knowledge of and experience seasons within the church's year;
- develop knowledge and understanding of scripture;
- develop and celebrate skills of creativity.

WHAT IS LITURGY?

- Liturgy is a communal act in which we praise and worship God. It is the source of the Church's life and our lives.
- Good liturgies involve the telling of the story of Christ and his Church. Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell.
- Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying.
- In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.
- The purpose of adapting liturgy for pupils is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the wider liturgy of the Church.

- Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity. Good liturgy touches our lives in such a way that we are renewed in our mission.

LITURGY/WORSHIP IN SCHOOL

Good worship happens when the whole school community, staff and pupils, are fully involved in the preparation and celebration. Time for worship is in addition to the 10% curriculum time for classroom Religious Education, as required by the Bishop’s Conference of England and Wales. Within St. Joseph’s, liturgy and worship provides opportunities for the community to come together to celebrate and share. Parents of a class leading whole school assembly are invited to join the worship, as well as individual class Masses that take place throughout the year.

Timetable of Worship

Day	Who is involved	Led by:	Worship:
Monday	KS1 & KS2	Headteacher/RE Lead	Gospel Assembly
Tuesday	Whole school	Class teacher	Collective Worship
Wednesday	KS1 & KS2	Headteacher	Hymn Practice
Thursday	Whole school	Class teacher	Collective Worship – well-being focus
Friday	Whole school	Headteacher/RE Lead	Celebration Assembly/ Class Assembly

Liturgy and worship in school follows the Church’s calendar in using daily scripture readings from relevant liturgical seasons in addition we celebrate ‘Come and See’ topics and key events in the school year. One assembly a week is led by the Headteacher or RE Lead (Deputy Headteacher) and follows the relevant readings of the forthcoming or previous Sunday, depending on time of year and holidays.

Advent and Lent

The seasons of Advent and Lent are times of preparation for Christmas and Easter, but need to be given their own importance. A focus is given to both of these seasons by raising money for a variety of charities and providing prayer groups for the children to attend. Prayer and assemblies at these times also reflect the season and special Advent/Lent assemblies take place every Friday. During the last week of the Spring Term preparation for Easter takes place, with the school focusing on the events of Holy Week. There are liturgies and prayers planned throughout the week to celebrate Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday. The week culminates with the Way of the Cross with parents and parishioners invited to join us in an adaptation of the Stations of the Cross. During Advent and Lent, Mass times are changed each Friday so that staff and children can attend before school.

Retreat

Whilst in KS2, the children are provided with the experience of a day retreat. Part of this day is involved with preparation on a particular church event or theme in the form of drama, prayer writing, or music.

INSET/Training

One INSET day per year or equivalent is allocated for Religious Development. This is an opportunity for staff to come together and reflect upon the spirituality of the school and their part within it. At least one staff meeting per term is dedicated to Religious Education to ensure staff are able to deliver the Come and See Scheme effectively.

Preparation for Mass

Worship Leaders, together with the RE Lead, take an active role in preparing for whole school Masses. Children are given the opportunity to select appropriate readings, choose hymns and write prayers. For year group Masses, children and class teachers plan Masses around a chosen theme, writing prayers, selecting readings, creating art work and completing class work linked to the theme.

Before Mass, class teachers remind children of suitable behaviour in Mass, practise responses and hymns and discuss expectations. Class teachers remind children that Communion should be received in a reverent way (clean hands) and how to indicate if they are receiving a blessing. How to genuflect is also practised. When sharing the sign of peace, children are reminded that it is to the person either side of them that they shake hands with, in a sensible and quiet manner.

Parents are informed of all whole school and class Masses in advance, to encourage the families of the children to join us.

Prayer

When praying with children we must remember that each of them is unique and therefore their prayer is unique. They come from different homes with different experiences and an individual set of questions or even anxieties. Teachers will need to provide creative and varied opportunities for prayer so that children from many diverse backgrounds have the best opportunities to discover their own spiritual response. The use of music and singing supports this.

To encourage children to learn a variety of Catholic prayers we focus on a different prayer each month throughout the school year. Please see the Prayer of the Month link on our school website.

Daily Prayer in the Classroom

A daily experience of prayer – in classroom, assembly or elsewhere is much more important than just a legal requirement. It should be at the heart of every school. It is a centre to which many of the achievements and challenges of daily life can be brought and from which strength and purpose can be taken. At this centre is Jesus, the Son of God. Daily prayer helps make Jesus real for all in the school – a friend whom they can trust and relate to, one who is a guide and one to whom they can turn in time of need. Prayer within the classroom should take place before and after lunch and at the start and end of the day. The community must be able to pray as well and recite prayers together. Pupils should learn and experience all forms of prayer so that they can adore, give praise and thanks, express sorrow to God on their own behalf and on behalf of others, as well as prayers of petition and intercession.

Each class should provide a prayer focus within their room in the form of a display, collection of artefacts, bible and candle etc. This is where the children can focus during times of class prayer or private reflection during the day.

While it is important that the children should learn to pray, there is always place for learning prayers that can be recited together. The RE curriculum plays an important role by providing opportunities to teach pupils about prayer and also for them to learn prayers.

Last Reviewed: December 2024

Next Review: December 2027