



St. Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP/PRAYER & LITURGY POLICY

Mission Statement:

We are proud of our school as a place of learning, prayer and happiness.
Hand in hand with God, Our Lady and St Joseph, we promise to work hard and be kind to one another
so that we can grow stronger together in our faith.
Hand in hand with God we learn.

The Nature of Collective Worship/Prayer & Liturgy:

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 a relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

Legal Requirements:

Schools are required to provide the opportunity for all pupils to participate in a daily act of worship. (This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship or separate acts of worship in school groups). The word *assembly* denotes a different activity from liturgical prayer. They may both form part of the same gathering but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

An assembly, which consists of simply saying a prayer, does not fulfil the requirement for collective worship/prayer & liturgy.

The liturgical prayer does not form part of curriculum time and should not be merged into Religious Education.

The Place of Prayer & Liturgy in the Life of the School:

We support the belief that Prayer & 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.
- Those from other faith backgrounds.
- Those with special educational and medical needs

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.

The Aims of Prayer & Liturgy:

We believe that Prayer & Liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God.
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues.
- To explore something of their own beliefs.
- To experience a sense of belonging and share community spirit.
- To develop a common ethos and shared values.
- To develop skills of reverence, contemplation, reflection and meditation.
- To enrich religious experience.
- To grow in liturgical understanding.
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.
- To reinforce positive attitudes.
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in Christ.

Principles:

All Liturgical Prayer in this school will:

- give honour and glory to God.
- be a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
- give children good liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and background so as to prepare them for the liturgical life of the church. (cf. *Directory for Masses with Children* para 9).

In order to do this celebrations will:

- be kept small wherever possible and relevant for the particular grouping of children.
- be short and appropriately paced.
- be simple and contain a variety of experiences and settings.

School Assemblies:

There is a separate assembly for key stages each week at the designated times.

Key Stage 1 (FS2 – Year 2)

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 – 6)

They last for 25 minutes and are led by a class teacher as indicated on the rota prepared and distributed by the R.E. team.

The theme of the assembly is prepared by the R.E. team or individual teacher.

The assembly themes are usually planned to compliment the current R.E. Topic, Feast Days, Liturgical seasons etc. but they may occasionally focus on other areas such as prayer, Christian values etc.

There is a whole school celebration assembly held each week. This may be held in key stages where appropriate.

School Liturgies/Liturgical Prayer:

There are key stage liturgical prayers held each week and led by a member of the SLT. These are prepared with a theme connected to the children's RE learning or the liturgical year.

Whole School Celebrations:

Feast Days:

Mass is celebrated in church on Holydays of Obligation and selected Feast Days, including St Joseph's Day. Teachers to ensure children are prepared for these celebrations by using the notes/stories in the R.E. Programme.

Christmas / Advent:

The school celebrates this season by focusing on the true meaning of Christmas.

The celebrations will take the form of whole school liturgical prayer following a week of preparation for the season of Advent.

At the end of term, there will be a whole school Christmas Mass in church, a KSI nativity play and KS2 will hold a Carol Concert.

Lent / Easter

During the last 2 weeks of term all members of staff are reminded to ensure that the stories relevant to Holy Week are covered with the children.

Assemblies during this time will focus on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and the death and resurrection of Our Lord.

When Holy Week falls in term time, special focus will be placed upon the events of Holy Week, through prayer, liturgies, artwork etc.

May

During May every year, the whole school will focus on the role of Mary as an example to us in living out our faith. A May Procession will take place from school to church, where all parts of school will contribute to a special celebration. This will be a whole school community event, open to parents, governors and other stakeholders.

The format for Prayer & Liturgy for our school will be:

Gather – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)

Word/Proclaim – most liturgical prayer will centre around at least one text from the Bible. The Word of God will be proclaimed from a bible or lectionary whenever possible.

Respond – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. We place our needs before God (intercessory prayers).

Go Forth/Mission – Giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgical prayer that they can take into their daily lives.

Recording

Prayer and Liturgy is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings, resources and reflection
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring of Prayer & Liturgy will be ongoing throughout the year, to ensure that where necessary support to staff can be given promptly. The school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship. A timetable for monitoring will be prepared by the RE Team.

The Role of the Co-ordinator for Prayer & Liturgy

Co-ordinator – Sinead Rooney

- Formulating a written policy for Prayer & Liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer & Liturgy which may at times form part of the school development plan.
- Ensuring that Prayer & Liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that Prayer & Liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for worship.
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Collective Worship/Prayer & Liturgy.

PLANNING, RECORDING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING.

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an act of liturgical prayer
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in Prayer & Liturgy

COMMUNICATION

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts of Liturgical Prayer
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Prayer & Liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Prayer & Liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain.
- Liaison with the Diocesan RE Centre

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Leading and organising in-service training for Prayer & Liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

RESOURCES

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Prayer & Liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.

Approved by Governors Signature

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Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governors in particular will play a most important role. Governors should review reports on the prayer life of the school on an annual basis. This policy will be reviewed in October 2024 in consultation with the whole teaching staff.