

## **LITURGY AND WORSHIP POLICY**

***I am the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6)***

*Our mission at St. Joseph's is to offer the community an encounter with the living God - Jesus Christ: The Way, The Truth, The Life. Our vision is to capture hearts to follow His way, enlighten minds to seek His truth and awaken souls to embrace His life. We believe in an education for the whole child - heart, mind and soul.*

St. Joseph's, through our mission, we understand that prayer and worship is central to all we do within our school community.

### ***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 knowledge and understanding of how to be the best disciple we can be;
- ✠ to question and journal our journey of faith;
- ✠ 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 and summit of the Church's life and our lives. All good liturgies involve the telling of the story of Christ and his Church, involving children to understand the importance of prayer in their lives. Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell. Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity. Effective liturgy touches our lives in such a way that we are renewed in our mission.

### **LITURGY/WORSHIP IN SCHOOL**

Purposeful 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 Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.



Within St. Joseph's, liturgy and worship provides opportunities for all members of the community (children, adults, parents and parish) to come together to celebrate and share and deepen their own faith. Liturgy and worship in school follows the Church's calendar in using daily scripture readings from relevant liturgical seasons. In addition, we celebrate the 'Come and See' topics and key events in the school year.

### Timetable of Worship

Monday	<b>Gospel Assembly</b> Led by the Headteacher or member of the SLT, following the key theme and relevant reading of the forthcoming Sunday. Focus to include all members of the community to engage in the weekly 'Gospel Challenge'. Resources are shared with parents (via the Headteacher's Blog) to encourage parents to celebrate the Gospel at home with their children.
Tuesday	<b>Witness Assembly</b> Throughout the year, all members of the school community will lead this worship. The focus on the theme and Gospel of the forthcoming week, is continued and extends children's knowledge of witnesses of Christ, through: focusing on key individuals in the world, learning skills and British values. The purpose of this worship is to broaden and strengthen the children's understanding of the weekly Gospel and how this can be shown in today's world.
Wednesday	<b>Collective Worship (Class or Year group)</b> Weekly class/year group worship is led by the class teachers and the children (Appendix A - Collective Worship Planner). This again focuses on the key theme and Gospel of the week, through the format of Gather, Word, Response and Go Forth. Time for the children to respond themselves to Big questions and develop their own understanding, differentiated to suit the children. Focus on more child-led worship to create a reflective atmosphere and children leading their understanding of their faith.
Thursday	<b>Spiritual Journaling</b> A reflective time in the week for children to individually explore their learning and thoughts from the week, through a creative medium. All staff partake to develop their own spirituality as well.
Friday	<b>Class Assembly</b> Each class throughout the year will create their own assembly, based on the weekly Gospel theme and share their reflections and understanding with the school and parents. This is shown through the creative medium of drama, song, choral readings and prayer.

### 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 certain causes and providing prayer/activity groups for the children to attend, run by volunteer staff. Prayer and assemblies at these times must also reflect the season, even if preparations for Christmas are also going on. Newsletters are sent home to explain the importance and encourage participation. Infant and Junior nativities and carol concerts take place to celebrate

the story of the birth of Christ. 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 class reflections and prayers planned throughout the week to celebrate Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday. The week culminates with the 'Way of the Cross' where parents and parishioners are invited to watch a 'Passion Play'. Each class provides a meditation on the parts of Holy Week. Following Easter, there is a New Life Liturgy which is planned to emphasise the resurrection - this is celebrated by the Reception classes as a whole school assembly. It is important that the children appreciate that Christmas Day and Easter Sunday are the beginnings of the seasons of Christmas and Easter.

### **Holy Days of Obligation**

Holy Days of Obligation are marked with a Mass or Liturgy, led by year groups in the parish church of St. Mary's or our School Hall.

### **Patronal Feast Day**

St. Joseph's day, our Patronal Feast day, is marked with a Mass in which each class is represented within and activities throughout the day are enjoyed and celebrated by year groups.

### **Class Masses**

Class Masses take place throughout the year (Year 6- Autumn, Year 5- Spring & Year 4- Summer.) These are known as teaching Masses, where the children are taught about the different parts of the Mass and their importance. Each class is responsible for their intercessions and parents are welcome to celebrate this special time with the class.

### **Reconciliation**

Reconciliation services take place for Year 6 (Advent) and Year 5 (Lent). They are led by the parish priests and provide the opportunity for individual confession. An opportunity for reflection and prayer is offered to children, who have not made their Holy Communion.

### **Reflection Day**

Year 6 are provided with the experience of a day retreat within their final term. Part of this day is involved with preparation for the Leavers' Mass in the form of drama, prayer writing, crafts or music.

### **Other Opportunities for Prayer**

Children are given an opportunity to pray every day at lunchtime. During lunch, a variety of offers are available for the children to attend of their own accord: prayer grottos are open every lunch time to offer children individual & small group reflection; a call to daily prayer including rosary, Bible stories, praise and worship; and a lunchtime chaplain is available to support children in their behaviour and relationships. Children are also offered opportunities to pray at different times of the year, such as in November for Remembrance, and important

celebrations in the Church (such as Novenas and Mary in October and May) are marked.

## **SPIRITUALITY**

### **Spiritual Council**

Working alongside the School Council, St Joseph's has a 'Spiritual Council'. Year 2 and each junior class has two representatives, who are responsible for demonstrating their spirituality through what they think, what they say and what they do. These children are role models for the school in following our Mission: the Way, the Truth and the Life. Once these children are nominated at the beginning of each year, they will participate in weekly meetings, managed by the RE coordinator. They will be responsible for the upkeep of prayer tables, RE displays, leading class worship and prayer, organising Masses and liturgies and being a 'spiritual voice' for their class and year group.

## **PREPARATION FOR MASS**

Preparing for Mass begins in the classroom when Class Teachers will take the opportunity to reflect on the theme and remind the children of the times in the Mass when they should be reflecting upon those themes in silence (after the Homily and Communion), meditating or praising God in their hearts. Opportunities in class to practise meditation and silent praise will help the children to develop this ability.

How pupils arrive and gather for any liturgy is vital as it creates the climate in which the liturgy is received. It is also true that how pupils depart will have an impact on how they remember the liturgy. Therefore, children should walk to the church or School Hall in a quiet and reflective manner, in descending age order, so that the younger children have less time waiting for Mass to begin. Music should provide a signal that the gathering part of the Mass has begun.

Children should be reminded about behaviour before Mass. Class teachers should remind children that communion should be received in a reverent way (clean hands) and how to cross arms if they are receiving a blessing. How to genuflect should be discussed and practised if necessary.

## **PRAYER**

Children have a natural aptitude for prayer. They are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, anger, disappointment and elation to the world around them. True prayer draws us to discover God within our deepest being, and calls us to walk with God in faith. Each person has to find the space within where the encounter with God takes place; the 'Come and See' scheme provides opportunities for this.

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 problems, anxieties and

questions. 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 signing supports this.

### **Daily prayer in the classroom**

A daily experience of prayer - in classroom, assembly or elsewhere - is much more than just a legal requirement. 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 the person of 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 times of need. Prayer within the classroom should take place before lunch and at the start and end of the day.

The community must be able to pray as well as 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 offer prayers of petition and intercession. Each class should provide a prayer focus within their room, in the form of a prayer table and display, collection of artefacts, Bible and candle etc. where the children can focus during times of class prayer or private reflection during the day.

While it is important that children should learn *to pray*, there is always a 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. (Appendix B)

### **Staff Prayer**

"One of the distinctive features of the Catholic school is that it proclaims itself as a faith community ... as part of their life as a faith community, Catholic schools are committed to communal prayer. There is an expectation that all teachers will play an active part in this."

All staff meetings begin with a prayer or reflection providing an opportunity to be still and quiet at the end of the day. The beginning of the Academic Year starts with a school Mass for staff and pupils. There is also a Deanery Mass that all staff are invited to attend in the first few weeks of the year.

There is a prayer table and prayer board displayed in the staffroom, where relevant prayer intentions are shared, alongside the weekly Gospel focus.

### **Parent Prayer**

Parents are invited and informed about opportunities to take part in the prayer life of the school and parish

through the Headteacher's Blog, Advent and Lenten Prayers and the Parent Prayer Group.

### **HOME-SCHOOL-PARISH LINKS**

Liturgy and worship can be a key way to develop and realise the links we have between home-school and parish. At St. Joseph's we are fortunate enough to have St. Mary's church adjoining our site. We are therefore actively involved in joint celebrations for Holy days of Obligation, where parents and parishioners are invited.

The weekly Gospel theme and focus are shared on the Headteacher's blog for parents to help enable discussions at home.

The school also offers a lead at celebrations within the parish on Education Sunday and supports sacramental preparation and celebration through classwork and attendance of First Holy Communion celebrations. A post communion celebration Mass is provided within school.

The school's harvest celebration provides an opportunity for all parties to come together. Children and parents are involved in gathering and arranging food in the School Hall, staff and children lead and participate in the liturgy and parents and parishioners pack the food into boxes, which is delivered by the children to the local elderly and other members of the community.

The school employs a counsellor for all members of the community (principally vulnerable children) to support their welfare. The priests of the parish support the chaplaincy for the school and have a special role in the sacramental life of the school.

### **DIFFERENTIATION**

A key principle of the Directory for Masses with Children is to enhance the quality of worship by adapting, whilst maintaining authenticity to the Catholic tradition, thus encouraging participation. Therefore worship and liturgy should be "suited to children's age and capabilities"

Children do not have to always understand all of the experiences provided in worship and liturgy, as they are aimed at a wide range of ages. They must, however, experience some elements that are relevant to them whenever they attend.

Curriculum RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for worship by giving them the means to understand the religious language and significance of the actions. Particular attention should be given to the Word of God, and all readings used in worship and liturgy, so that it is proclaimed at a level appropriate to the pupils' age and capacity.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Multicultural Issues**

In respect of worship and liturgy, it is very important to be faithful to the Catholic tradition. The school community reflects our multicultural society, thus it is appropriate to incorporate a multicultural dimension to the worship and liturgy. A certain degree of sensitivity is required to avoid tokenism and enable authentic celebration. The Catholic Church is a world-wide community (the largest multicultural institution in the world) with a wealth of different cultural traditions. It is helpful to draw upon these common traditions to promote a multicultural perspective.

### **Multifaith Issues**

Worship and liturgy that has a multi-faith dimension is more problematic. It is unwise for a Catholic school to fully celebrate a non-Christian feast or event. Liturgies and prayer should look to be inclusive where possible. We are sensitive to the needs of children of other faiths and provide time for their own worship in school, for example, during Ramadan. The presence of another faith will enrich and deepen the understanding of our own when there is genuine dialogue. We believe a faith community is well placed for that dialogue to be most respected and fostered. Our admissions policy reflects and welcomes that dialogue. Prayer is universal to all faiths and opportunities for personal and reflective prayer is the most inclusive.

## **PLANNING/MONITORING/EVALUATION**

Good liturgical celebrations are dependent upon good preparation. The involvement of those who celebrate in this preparation is crucial.

Key elements which guide liturgy preparations:

- \* the Scripture readings
- \* the season of the liturgical year/feast
- \* the nature of the celebration
- \* particular events or concerns for the school or wider community
- \* the nature of the school

### **Masses**

Masses are planned by the RE coordinator and chaplaincy team in liaison with year groups in turn. It is crucial that the priest or leader is briefed and provided with information about the structure of the celebration (Appendix C - Mass preparation form and Mass booklet).

### **Class Assemblies**

Class assemblies to the whole school are collective acts of worship and should therefore be planned for

accordingly. They should start with the sign of the cross, a prayer which involves all those present and signals the beginning of the celebration. Prayers should be seen as an integral part of the celebration and should represent the various forms of prayer which the children experience. Readings and stories should be at an appropriate level to engage the interest of the whole community and should be read clearly. The use of art, dance, music and drama adds interest to the celebration, creates atmosphere and maintains the participation of the rest of the community. All assemblies should be planned, including the scripture reading, liturgical season, feast day or sacramental occasion as its focus.

### **Monitoring**

It is important to evaluate all aspects of the liturgy including the preparation process in order to improve (Appendix D - evaluation questions). Worship is a special living experience and evaluation needs to support its development. Regular informal reflection is the most appropriate short term evaluation with periodic records or consultation supporting Collective Worship in the SDP.

Just as every part of the curriculum needs to be monitored, so does liturgy. The purpose of monitoring is to identify good practice, as well as to support and develop areas of weakness. Monitoring will be coordinated by the SLT and a variety of stakeholder reflections will be invited.

Parents are asked for feedback after each class assembly and are given the opportunity to share their views and opinions in RE and Collective Worship surveys.

Date updated: Autumn 2022

Date for review: Autumn 2023



**APPENDIX A**

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP PLANNER**

Class/Leaders:	Date:
Theme:	
<b>Gather</b> - welcome	
<b>Word</b> - scripture	
<b>Response to the Word</b> - Prayer/Symbolic Action/Key Questions	
<b>Go forth</b> - mission	
<b>Evaluation...</b>	



## APPENDIX B

### COLLECTIVE WORSHIP GUIDANCE



### Collective Worship

Class/Leaders:

Date:



Theme:

#### Gather — welcome

Set the scene — consider layout of the space and the seating arrangements.

Lighting? Fragrance?

Can everyone see the focal point?

What symbols/objects will you use?

Bible — for the Word

Candle for Jesus as light of the world — may have a smaller table with candles for each class

Cross or Crucifix — depending on the time of the year

Liturgical colours — help to focus on the mood for the season



#### Word- scripture

Every liturgy must include a biblical text — it is through the Word that God speaks to us and calls us to respond

Ensure the word can be read — choose readers carefully allow them time to rehearse

Allow for times of silence

##### Example:

Luke 24:13-35 — The Road to Emmaus

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke

**Glory to you, O Lord**

...Gospel read aloud...

The Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**



#### Response to the Word — Prayer/Symbolic Action/Key Questions

Key questions — ask the children questions about the Word of God to help them understand it

Sing — children enjoy singing — chose music relevant to the time of the year

Actions, dance and drama — allows us to reflect on scripture and turn towards God in a prayerful response

Bidding prayers — Lord in your mercy, We pray to the Lord

Ritual action — usually using the senses



#### Go Forth - Mission

How can this relate to our lives? What can we do? Why is this important?

What will you do to help those present take the message away with them prayer card, picture, symbol, action/deed etc.

Music or hymn to leave



What the children thought....

## APPENDIX C

### TRADITIONAL PRAYERS MET WITHIN COME AND SEE

#### **FOUNDATION STAGE**

##### **Sign of the cross**

##### **Morning and Evening prayers**

##### **Prayers before and after meals**

Simple litanies of thanks and praise

Prayerful reflection on the day

Prayers for the blessing of the Advent wreath

Prayers for the lighting of Advent candles

Responses at Mass:

*Peace be with you*

*And also with you.*

*Thanks be to God.*

Greeting the Gospel - *Alleluia*

#### **KEY STAGE 1**

As above, plus:

##### **Our Father**

##### **Hail Mary**

Glory be to the Father

Morning offering

##### **Grace at meals**

Simple Magnificat

Come Holy Spirit

Act of Sorrow

Prayers used at Baptism

Prayer for Lent - This is the wood of the cross

Simple examination of conscience

Prayers at Mass:

*Lord have mercy*

*Prayers of Intercession*

*Eucharistic prayer for Masses with Children 11*

#### **KEY STAGE 2**

As above, plus:

I confess

Angelus

Benedictus

Magnificat

Eternal rest

Act of love

##### **Act of Contrition** (long and **short**)

The Rosary

Stations of the cross

Litany of Saints

Prayers used for sacramental rites

Prayers from the liturgy for special feasts

Funeral Mass prayers

Blessing and giving of ashes

Saints' prayers e.g. St Teresa of Avila

Prayers at Mass:

*Penitential rite*

*Glory to God*

*Creed*

*Offertory prayers*

*Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with*

*Children I, II and III*

*Holy, holy*

*Lamb of God*

*Rite of dismissal*

**(Those in bold should be learned)**



## APPENDIX D

### **MASS PREPARATION FORM**

**CELEBRATION/LITURGICAL SEASON** \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS MASS	YEAR MASS	SCHOOL MASS	PLACE
DATE	TIME	AGE OF CHILDREN	NUMBER

🎵 **ENTRANCE HYMN** \_\_\_\_\_

LORD HAVE MERCY (SUNG/SAID)

GLORIA (SUNG/SAID - NOT DURING ADVENT OR LENT)

FIRST READING \_\_\_\_\_ READ BY \_\_\_\_\_

RESPONSORIAL PSALM \_\_\_\_\_ READ BY \_\_\_\_\_

SECOND READING \_\_\_\_\_ READ BY \_\_\_\_\_

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (SUNG/SAID)

GOSPEL \_\_\_\_\_

UNIVERSAL PRAYER \_\_\_\_\_ READ BY \_\_\_\_\_

🎵 **OFFERTORY HYMN** \_\_\_\_\_

OFFERTORY PROCESSION \_\_\_\_\_

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

HOLY, HOLY (SUNG/SAID)

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION (SUNG/SAID)

OUR FATHER

SIGN OF PEACE

LAMB OF GOD (SUNG/SAID)

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS \_\_\_\_\_

🎵 **COMMUNION HYMNS:**

🎵 **RECESSIONAL HYMNS:**

## **APPENDIX E**

### **QUESTIONS FOR EVALUATING LITURGY AND WORSHIP**

#### **PREPARATION**

- Who was involved in the preparation?
- Was the preparation inclusive?
- Were sound principles used to prepare this liturgy?
- What use was made of the Church's season and Lectionary?
- Has the preparation given opportunities for potential leaders to develop?
- Has the preparation process nurtured the faith development of all?

#### **THE CELEBRATION**

- Did what you prepare succeed?
- What was the quality of the participation?
- Were those who ministered (reader, leader etc.) effective?
- How successful was the music?
- Was there a good use of space?
- Was the liturgical focus clear?

#### **AREAS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

- Who needs to be more involved in the preparation process?
- What positive aspects can be reinforced?
- What are the whole school training needs?
- Who needs individual training?
- What changes are needed to the environment?
- What new resources are needed?
- How will the changes be agreed and then managed?