PRAYER AND LITURGY

Policy for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

June 2024

Understanding Prayer and Liturgy

In any school there will be a range of prayer and liturgy: classroom prayer, meditation, assemblies, devotions, special services for times in the school year, celebrations of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each form of prayer and liturgy will have its own character dependent on the circumstances, size and age of the group, the place of celebration and its content.

Definition of Terms

Prayer, Liturgical Prayer, and Liturgy form a continuum with silent meditation at one end and a celebration of Mass on a Solemnity of the Church (e.g., Ascension of the Lord) at the other. Of course, there are areas of overlap between the categories.

Prayer **Liturgical Prayer** **Liturgy**

Christian meditation Service of the Word Sacraments:

Prayer before meals Assembly Liturgy of Hours Mass

Penance

Devotions Benediction

Prayer	Liturgical Prayer	Liturgy
Simple structure	Structured (often 4 part)	Taken from official books
One or two elements	Elements drawn from liturgy	Complex structure
Balance of familiarity & creativity	Places of Scripture	Many elements
	Contrasts and creativity	Range of ministry

In Catholic terminology 'worship' is not generally used to name and describe a distinct type of prayer or event. Worship is about living our lives in a way that recognises that everything we have is a gift from God and that everything we do gives glory to God. That, of course, does include prayer but the scope is broader. With that understanding of worship it will be seen that that the purpose of education in a Catholic school is to know and love Christ and to open the vision and imagination of all pupils to the wonder of living in God's world, and the responsibilities that follow from this.

Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 there is a statutory duty to inspect and report on denominal education (that is religious education) and collective worship in schools designated as having a religious character. For this reason, the term 'Collective Worship' has been kept as the headline judgement by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate but throughout the framework it is referred to as prayer and liturgy. This model policy addresses the shift in vocabulary and is an interim response to the draft Prayer and Liturgy Directory. When the Directory is published it will contain a model policy which the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle will adapt for schools.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Mission Statement

At St Joseph's we live, love and learn by the example of Jesus.

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It 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, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit.

'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.'[1]

Legal Requirements

It is a legal requirement that there is a daily 'act of worship' offered for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single 'act of worship' for all pupils, or separate 'acts of worship' in school groups. Holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. Prayer, liturgical prayer and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between will always be made clear.

The 'act of worship' is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education. Responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy lies with the Governing Body after consultation with the headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from 'Collective Worship'. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will be made aware of the fact that it can never be confined to 'timetabled slots' but may take place in a variety of contexts other that those which are specifically structured, within Come and See RE curriculum.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St Joseph's Primary School

Prayer and liturgy is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

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;
- Those from other faith backgrounds.

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy
Prayer and liturgy in St Joseph's School aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate the mystery of God
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues
- To explore personal beliefs
- To respond to and to celebrate life
- To experience a sense of belonging and to develop community spirit
- To develop a common ethos and shared values
- To enrich religious experience
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- To reinforce positive attitudes
- To participate fully
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Principles
All acts of prayer in St Joseph's School will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead prayer times;
- Give pupils positive liturgical experiences, appropriate to their age, aptitude and family backgrounds in order to prepare them for the liturgical life of the Church.[2] Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

Planning, content and celebration
Prayer and Liturgy is planned:

- Following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of Prayer and Liturgy 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 pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
- Opportunities for children to listen, reflect and be prayerful.

The Timetable of Prayer and Liturgy is as below:

Day	Location and time	Who will be present	Delivered by
Monday	9am school hall	Whole school and all staff	Head teacher Deputy Head teacher
Tuesday	9am school hall	KS1/EYFS children (Key Stage) linked to Gospel reading (gather, word, reflect, mission)	KS1/EYFS teacher on rota

	9am in class/prayer room/prayer garden reflection	KS2 children	Class Teacher
Wednesday	9am school hall	Singing worship – all children and staff Linked to Gospel of the week	Mrs Skelton and Miss Gunn
Thursday	9am school hall 9am in class/prayer room/prayer garden reflection	KS2 children (Key Stage) linked to Gospel reading (gather, word, reflect, mission) KS1/EYFS children	KS2 teacher on rota Class Teacher
Friday	9am school hall 1pm in class/prayer room/prayer garden reflection	School celebration assembly, prayer led All children	SLT Class Teachers

Leading Prayer and Liturgy
As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead prayer and liturgy. Our Head Teacher as well as Associate Head Teacher will plan and lead prayer and liturgy. Our class teachers will lead class prayer and liturgy as well as support and lead our pupils' in pupil led worship with the support of Senior Leaders as well as our RED lead. Children are taught to plan and lead prayer times according to their age.

Recording
Prayer and liturgy is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- planning proforma for class Prayer and Liturgy
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, etc

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.

Resources
Prayer and liturgy are central to our 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 eg. our indoors 'Prayer room' and outside 'Prayer Garden' 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. Each class has an RE box with artefacts and fabrics suitable for all seasons of the liturgical year, a set of resources to support child led Prayer and Liturgy, as well as age appropriate Bibles.
Other resources are available in central store and Chapel, including:

- Posters
- Candles / Rosaries / other artefacts
- CAFOD / CST materials
- Bibles
- Collection of RE reference books on a variety of topic

The learning environment
'Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment' [3]
Focal points in each classroom and throughout the school will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the school's ethos.

Retreats and links with our Local Parish
During special times, such as, Advent, Lent and Holy Days, the school holds Mass in School and this is open for voluntary prayer and worship for children, parents and parishioners.
In addition, classes attend Mass, once a week at 10am mass, this is on a rota basis.
We timetable retreat times through the year in school, linking and working with our local Catholic Diocese schools. We also invite key speakers in to school and hold workshops for our children in order to develop further understanding of religion.

The Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

- Mrs Katie Moseley – Head Teacher
- Mrs Julia Skelton – Pray and Liturgy team

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator 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.

Policy date:
September 2026

Review date:
September 2027