

# FCJ Primary School



## Prayer and Liturgy Policy

### Mission Statement

*Teach the children with all the kindness and gentleness possible.*

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**Article 14 - Every child has the right to think and believe what they want, and to practice their religion.**

The FCJ Governors are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at every opportunity and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



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## 1 Introduction

FCJ Primary School aims to make school a place where the Gospel values of Christ are taught, lived and experienced; where prayer and liturgical celebration are integral to life; and where religious growth and development are stimulated within the whole curriculum.

## 2 The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Christian worship in FCJ Primary School celebrates God's presence in our lives. It provides children with opportunities to give 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 with Him, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Children are encouraged to participate and respond, whether through involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to, and joining in, the worship offered.

## 3 The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of Our School

Worship in FCJ Primary School is an integral part of school life and central to our 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 children's personal relationship with God our Father is fostered through prayer in the following ways:

- prayer of silence
- spontaneous prayer
- praying through gesture or action
- formal prayer
- creative responses (art)
- music and singing

Prayer and Liturgy is a spiritual experience to which **all** can contribute and from which **all** can gain.



## 4 Responsibility

### 4.1 Governance

The governors, as guardians of the Catholic school's life and mission, have a responsibility to ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of FCJ Primary School
- the RE Lead is responsible for overseeing prayer and liturgy in the school
- the prayer and liturgy policy is updated regularly and shared with all stakeholders
- there is a budget for prayer and liturgy that reflects its centrality to the life of a Catholic school.

### 4.2 Headteacher

The headteacher, as the spiritual leader of the school as a Catholic community, ensures that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school
- they work in partnership with the leader(s) for prayer and liturgy
- those responsible for prayer and liturgy in the school have been given appropriate training and formation to ensure that all guidance is followed and adhered to
- there are suitable resources for prayer and liturgy in the school

### 4.3 Leading Prayer and Liturgy

Those responsible for prayer and liturgy ensure that:

- prayer and liturgy are central to the Catholic life of the school
- there is an annual plan of provision for prayer and liturgy across the school year which identifies liturgical seasons and key celebrations. There are also opportunities for the celebration of the Sacraments, with daily planned prayer for all pupils, appropriate to age and ability.
- pupils are supported in their liturgical formation to take an active role in the planning, preparation, and delivery of prayer and liturgy according to their age and capacity, and in a manner which facilitates their progressive participation
- resources to support the planning of prayer and liturgy are appropriate and readily available to staff and pupils
- induction on prayer and liturgy takes place for new members of staff as required
- staff have access to effective training and formation opportunities
- monitoring and evaluation of prayer and liturgy take place regularly and feeds back into planning for future liturgies
- monitoring of prayer and liturgy is reported to the headteacher and governing body to support whole-school development and the Catholic life of the school
- there is meaningful collaboration with local clergy and the parish



## 5 Overview of prayer and liturgy provision

Prayer reflects a personal relationship with God. At FCJ Primary School, we assist pupils to explore a variety of methods from private prayer to spontaneous prayer as well as group prayer in both formal and informal settings.

During times of prayer, it is important to:

- affirm and celebrate the values and ethos of the school
- help the child become familiar with the traditional forms of worship in the Catholic Church
- instil in pupils a sense of reverence
- experience belonging to a worshipping community of faith
- provide opportunities to develop a personal relationship with God
- encourage a sense of awe and wonder for God's creation
- give pupils an understanding of the value of prayer, and its importance in the Christian faith and other religions
- support the children to lead (age & stage appropriate) a meaningful experience.

## 6 The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy provides the opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To reflect on our growing relationship with God.
- To reflect on spiritual and moral issues.
- To explore their own beliefs.
- To respond to and celebrate life.
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit through planned opportunities throughout the year
- To develop a common ethos and shared values.
- To enrich religious experience.
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development.
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition.
- To participate fully and reinforce positive attitudes.
- To take time out 'to wonder at,' 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

## 7 Principles

All acts of worship in FCJ Primary School:

- Give glory and honour to God.
- Provide a quality experience, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character.
- Develop children's skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
- 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.

In order to do this, celebrations are:

- Appropriate in content and length to the age and experience of the children.
- Appropriately paced
- Simple yet effective and meaningful, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.



## 8 Resourcing

Prayer and liturgy are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school, and this is reflected in the 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 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.

## 9 Training and Formation

All new staff will be supported during induction and beyond, so that they fully understand the responsibility they carry within their individual role for leading prayer and liturgy in the school. Any individual training needs will be identified and addressed through training and formation. There will also be the opportunity for whole-staff professional development at least once a year, so that all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy and relevant staff are well supported to lead as required.

## 10 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.

## 11 Planning, Features and Format of Prayer and Liturgy

In FCJ Primary School, Prayer and Liturgy is planned with reference to the Church's Liturgical Year, the God Matters topics, significant dates and the world around us.

All members of staff plan Prayer and Liturgy using the agreed school planning flipchart template. The RE Lead invites the staff to follow agreed themes and this information is distributed to staff through INSET and staff meetings at the beginning of each term. Collective discussions take place regularly between staff members, enabling implementation of fresh ideas and approaches.

Our pupils are encouraged to plan and lead Prayer and Liturgy sessions and record their ideas for each part of the process; Gather, Listen, Respond and Go Forth. In Key Stage Two, pupils use their Prayer and Liturgy e-books for their planning. In Key Stage One pupils use the pupil planning cards to select an idea for each part of the process.

Each week the whole school gathers for an assembly led by the Head teacher. These gatherings always begin with a time of prayer and include music for worship. There are also opportunities over the course of the year to learn about various Catholic Traditions within these assemblies.

During the week, children in every class have a time for prayer at the beginning of the day, lunchtime and at the end of the day. Where appropriate, children are encouraged to follow seasonal liturgical events e.g., October and May - reciting a decade of the Rosary.

A long-term plan for each academic year is built around the Liturgical Year, with whole school Masses planned in for Holy Days of Obligation, as well as key liturgical events. The RE Lead works alongside the Chaplaincy Team and members of the local clergy to plan these Masses.



At FCJ Primary School, acts of worship include the following features:

- Appropriate music for the children to gather to.
- A focus area with appropriate artefacts and symbols.
- Scripture or appropriate reading.
- Opportunity for prayer, whether together or silently.

## 12 Celebration of the Word

The Prayer & Liturgy Lead will plan and share the chaplaincy calendar each term. This details the rhythm of liturgy and celebration of the word across the academic year, reflecting the liturgical year and celebrations unique to the school.

Celebration of the Word in our school may follow this structure or a variation of this structure:

- Gathering - how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet/ reflective music, lighted candles, statues, sign of the cross, focus and examination of conscience etc.);
- Word - a reading from the Scriptures (or another suitable source), breaking the word, time to reflect on this and prayers to fit into the theme
- Action - a ritual movement that everyone can join in with that fits with the theme (gestures such as shaking hands, holding hands, lighting a candle, prayers, responses to prayers, etc.)
- Mission - the sending out from the celebration, giving the children something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.
- It may also include some of the following:
  - a visual focus
  - poetry or prose
  - music
  - prayer
  - a psalm
  - dance
  - drama
  - outdoor prayer

## 13 Recording

- Records of themes are kept in the shared teaching area of the network in the curriculum folder for RE.
- Staff use the planning format provided by the RE coordinator and keep weekly plans in their short-term planning folders. Photographic evidence of Pupil led Prayer is saved within the RE folder. All e-books are accessible on Google Drive.
- Class Altars display pupil responses and prayers where appropriate.

## 14 Voluntary Worship/Reflection

Pupils, staff, parents and Governors are given the opportunity to take part in liturgical celebrations that do not form part of the normal school day. These include:

- Reflection opportunities to support the RE Curriculum and Year 4 Sacramental Preparation.
- Stations of the Cross.
- Advent and Easter days.
- Year 6 School Leavers' Mass.



## **15 The Coordination of Prayer and Liturgy**

The coordination of Prayer and Liturgy is the responsibility, under the direction of the Headteacher, of the RE Co-ordinator.

## **16 Conclusion**

Prayer and Liturgy in FCJ reflects the tradition of the Church and has Christ at its heart. Through clear aims and principles and a shared vision and strategy, we hope to provide our pupils with experiences of Prayer and Liturgy that are relevant, appropriate and life giving.

## **17 Review**

The policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of policy review conducted by the governors.