

# St Joseph's Catholic Academy

Part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate



Catholic Academy

Learning and Growing Together  
in Faith and Friendship

## Collective Worship and Prayer Policy

September 2020

## *‘Learning and growing together in faith and friendship’*

**Learning** to live like Jesus taught us.

**Growing together** as children of God.

Sharing our **faith** through service to others.

Showing our **friendship** with Jesus through words and actions.

### **Our Mission**

At St Joseph’s Catholic Academy we promote the Christian values of love, respect, tolerance and forgiveness, as revealed to us through the life of Jesus Christ.

Our mission statement - ‘Learning and Growing Together in Faith and Friendship’ – captures our desire to follow the example of Christ in welcoming, nurturing and developing the individual child as a unique and precious gift, created in the image of God.

We recognise the dignity of each individual and aim to live as one family based on the Gospel values.

### **Legal Requirements**

Collective worship is a legal daily requirement which is distinct from curriculum time. For Catholic schools, this requirement is made explicit within the Trust Deed of the Archdiocese of Birmingham which states: “Religious worship is to be in accordance with the rites, practices, discipline and liturgical norms of the Catholic Church. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.”

### **A Worshipping Community**

St Joseph’s School is a worshipping community: we place prayer, worship and liturgical celebration at the very heart of our expression of Catholic tradition. We actively strive to provide a varied experience of worship and to promote engagement through the creative contributions of both pupils and staff.

We understand that, through prayer and collective acts of worship, we can develop our relationship with God and we can talk to Him in many ways. Therefore, it is our duty to provide every child with the opportunity to meet God through engagement in the spoken word, music, dance, drama, art and through silent reflection. We particularly value opportunities to nurture pupils in leading collective worship and developing prayer experiences of their own making.

We realise that, as one “instrument” of the Church, we cannot achieve this in isolation and therefore need to encourage a collaborative partnership between the home, the parish and the school. We recognise that each of these groups has a responsibility to fulfil its role and seek to support parents in this mission.

### **Linking Home-School-Parish**

Parents are acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their child, and are regularly welcomed into school to secure a strong partnership. They are invited to attend Mass, class assemblies and other liturgical celebrations, along with Inspire workshops and opportunities for reflection in the form of a Class Saint liturgy. Emphasis is placed on helping them to understand the vital role they can play in teaching their children the importance of worship and developing the prayer life of their children.

Class teachers may set home learning tasks based on curriculum topics and religious learning. Parents are encouraged to support their children wherever possible; this includes sharing the Ten: Ten parent resources which reflect the weekly Sunday Gospel message. A link to the parent newsletter is put on the weekly Communicator to parents, alongside links to the parish newsletter and relevant prayers and reflections.

A Mini Vinnies group has been established within school and we seek opportunities to work with the SVP within our parish, the representative being the Chair of our Academy Committee. Joint projects include working together to make Advent wreaths for each class, charity events and work during our Vocations day. We also have strong links with CAFOD and Fr. Hudson's, who frequently come in to share liturgies, workshops and prayer services with our children.

## **Prayer and Collective Worship at St Joseph's**

In addition to the four formal prayer times throughout the school day (morning, grace before and after meals and home-time), prayer and worship is an integral part of the day at St Joseph's and is not separated from the rest of school life. Pupils all share in this important aspect of our daily experience. Children have a natural aptitude for prayer and are open to God. They respond in many ways to the world around them and their experiences at school should be full of opportunities for exploration and discovery. Teachers will create an environment where these responses are developed, in recognition that they can form the beginnings of prayer. To this end, each classroom will have a special prayer area that reflects the current topic/ liturgical season. These spaces are intended to support pupils to initiate their own prayers. Prayer spaces in Years 1 to 6 have a class prayer book, where children are encouraged to express their own prayer intentions, which can be shared with their class as the children wish.

Each week pupils participate in:

- ✠ A Gospel-based assembly (Mondays)
- ✠ A Key Stage Assembly (Tuesdays/ Wednesdays)
- ✠ A whole school/ Key Stage/ class Mass (Thursdays)
- ✠ A Success Assembly, recognising each child's God-given gifts and talents (Fridays)
- ✠ Daily opportunities for liturgy and prayer through Ten: Ten daily prayer resources and/ or RE lessons/ class collective worship

Classes from Year 3 to Year 6 take turns to lead collective worship throughout the year in Key Stage assemblies, and Reception, Year 1 and 2 will take an active role in participating where the teachers see fit.

We have a well-established prayer garden in the courtyard of the school. It is an ideal setting for reflection during RE lessons and provides a tranquil area for meditation. Annually it is used as part of our Crowning of Mary liturgy. It has been also used for other whole-school acts of collective worship, including Armistice Day, retreats and commemorative school celebrations.

Similarly, special areas within school have been developed to assist and focus prayer. These can both reflect a specific liturgical season, a wider Catholic agenda or, alternatively, they may be designed to celebrate the Catholic Pupil Profile Values and Virtues. These displays can be found both within classrooms and in communal spaces, such as the hall, dining room and entrance area. Pupils are invited to compose their own prayers which can be placed in a special place on the central prayer table. These prayers are then offered up to God during times of Collective Worship.

### **Mass**

Children participate in Mass, both at school and at church on a weekly basis. These may take the form of whole-school, Key Stage or Class Masses. Parents, parishioners and families are encouraged to attend Mass alongside our children. Children are well- prepared for Mass, with teachers sharing and discussing the Gospel in advance, and children are encouraged to reflect upon the Mass after

attending in the form of a Mass reflection activity. Evidence of this can be found in children's RE books and/or the class Catholic Life book.

### **Collective Worship and the Liturgical Year**

Children attend Mass on Holy Days of obligation whenever these fall on a school day.

During Advent, the children learn about the Jesse tree and the ancestry of Jesus during liturgies led by children in each class. In the lead up to Christmas, children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 perform nativity plays which are shared with the school, parents and parish. The whole school ends the season of Advent by leading a Christmas Carol service, narrated mainly by Year 6, through scripture and traditional and contemporary carols. This takes place in St Joseph's parish church and is very well attended by families and parishioners.

The Christmas season begins with a celebration of the Epiphany to mark the first school Mass of the new year.

On Ash Wednesday, we have a joint school and parish Mass. During Lent, child-led liturgies focus upon the events of Holy Week, including the re-enacting of Palm Sunday, The Last Supper, the Agony in the Garden, and culminating in Year 6 leading a powerful depiction of the Stations of the Cross.

During the months of May and October, our Catholic Life Leaders lead a daily decade of the Rosary, to which all of Key Stage 2 are invited. At the start of May, we celebrate Mass as a whole-school community and celebrate the Crowning of Mary.

On the Feast Days of our House Saints (Ss Andrew, David, George and Patrick), the Y5 and 6 children in each House, led by the House Captains, prepare and lead an assembly on their House Saint, ensuring that the whole school knows the story of these inspirational people and what we can learn from their example.

Staff meetings always start with the Staff prayer and often other prayers are prayed additionally in keeping with the liturgical year or particular prayer intentions. The school year and INSET days begin with a staff liturgy in which all staff are expected to actively participate.

### **Class-Based Collective Worship**

Children from Y1- Y6 are involved in planning and leading their own class-based collective worship, based either upon the liturgical year or their currently learning in RE, whichever the class teacher deems most appropriate. All classes are expected to be involved in group planning of their collective worship at least half-termly, based on the 4-part structure: Gather, Listen, Respond and Go Forth. Children use the Diocesan recommended planning boards to help structure the planning of class-based collective worship. EYFS also participate in class-based collective worship, at least once a fortnight. Evidence of child-led class-based worship is available in each class's Catholic Life book.

### **Prayer Focus**

Each classroom has an area set aside as a focus for prayer. Prayer focuses should not be placed above the children's comfortable field of vision. Each prayer space must include:

1. drapes of the correct colour to reflect the liturgical season

2. an artificial candle (a wax candle can be displayed for visual purposes but must not be lit in classrooms)
3. statue/ icon/ image appropriate to current learning/ liturgical season. Class teachers may feel it appropriate to alternate these with other classes from time to time
4. class prayer book
5. seasonal display containing either children's work or relevant images, words and/or information
6. current Catholic Pupil profile Values and Virtues

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure the maintenance of prayer foci. This may be delegated to the classroom assistants. It is important to ensure that these areas remain sacred and are not used for any other purpose.

Catholic Life Leaders monitor the prayer spaces on a regular basis, particularly during a liturgical season change. The finding of their checklist is reported back to the RE Leader for monitoring.

### **Words for Prayer**

Pupils are taught that prayer is a way of talking to God. They are encouraged to develop their own prayers and to request God's support during times of difficulty, when saying sorry, or to thank and praise Him. The Catholic Life leader has devised an annual timetable where children recite the chosen 'Prayer of the Month' daily. These prayers are age-appropriate and liturgically apt, and help to teach children about the importance of traditional Catholic prayer. Staff also plan opportunities for pupils to learn formal prayers in line with the Diocesan strategy, 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'.

Prayers are learnt by:

- ✚ Children hearing and joining in with them
- ✚ Singing
- ✚ Through topics linked to particular prayer

### **Prayer Experiences**

Prayer engagement consists of listening, speaking, reflecting and resting. Pupils will experience a range of forms and styles of prayer, including:

- ✚ Praying the psalms
- ✚ Traditional Prayers e.g. Hail Mary
- ✚ Colour through Prayer
- ✚ Scripture – reflections on scripture
- ✚ Prayer of the heart – stillness
- ✚ Contemplation
- ✚ Gestures e.g. the sign of the cross and the sign of peace
- ✚ Hymns, both modern and traditional

- ✚ Music – listening to quiet reflective music or other
- ✚ Litanies
- ✚ Processions – Gospel processions with sung acclamation
- ✚ Prayer services and liturgies
- ✚ Gathering in prayer - assemblies, Mass and prayer services
- ✚ Celebrating all aspects of life - Remembrance
- ✚ Use of display – art, banners, display boards, posters
- ✚ Other curriculum areas – Arts afternoon, cross curricular links, themed weeks / days, mission week and Inspire Workshops.

### **Introduction of Prayer**

Learning prayers by heart is a gift for life. We place special emphasis on those prayers marked with an asterisk as ones that pupils should be able to say from memory.

#### **Foundation Stage:**

- Sign of the Cross \*
- School prayer
- Hail Mary
- Our Father
- Morning and end-of-day prayers\*
- Grace before and after meals\*
- Simple responses at Mass
- Greeting the Gospel (acclamation)
- Simple litanies of thanks and praise
- Prayerful reflection on the day
- Prayers for the blessing of the Advent wreath
- Prayers for the lighting of the Advent candles

#### **Key Stage One**

All those listed above, and:

- Sign of the Cross \*
- School prayer \*
- Hail Mary \*
- Our Father \*
- Glory be to the Father \*
- Morning Offering \*
- Grace before Meals \*
- Grace after Meals \*
- End of day prayer\*
- Act of Sorrow

- Begin to join in Mass responses

### **Key Stage Two**

All those listed above, and:

- I confess \*
- Angelus \*
- Eternal rest \*
- Act of Contrition \*
- The Mysteries of the Rosary
- Stations of the Cross
- Mass responses\*

### **Resources**

Resources are monitored by the RE leader and new resources are ordered, within the budget, where required. School resources are mostly kept in the RE Store Cupboard (previously SEN cupboard) Music resources/ CDs for Collective Worship are kept in the Head Teacher's office and a copy of backing tracks have also been downloaded onto the staff's shared area of the school network. Each class has several artefacts for their prayer areas such as rosary beads, statues etc. These may be shared amongst staff as they wish.

### **Monitoring**

Termly and annual monitoring schedules are completed and reviewed by the RE Leader, with input from SLT where required. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worships takes place in a variety of ways: looking at class prayer and Catholic Life books, scrutinising RE books and planning, formally and informally monitoring acts of collective worship/ Mass, pupil interviews and evidence of reflections on worship.

Termly meetings with the link governor, Gillian Hodgkinson, are scheduled and minutes from these meetings are reported and shared with the RE Leader, Principal and Board of Directors. Actions from the previous minutes are discussed at the following meeting to ensure progress and impact.

The school's provision for Collective Worship is evaluated annually to consider how it meets the needs of pupils and whether it truly reflects the aims and mission of the school.

The RE Leader may evaluate the quality of collective worship in the school by conducting informal evaluations, with the permission and consultation with staff members throughout the school year. Staff are always invited to observe Senior Leader's assemblies, prayer times and acts of collective as good practice.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

All children at St Joseph's Catholic Academy have a right to be included in accessible Collective Worship unless withdrawn at parental request. Inclusion of all is a cornerstone of Catholic belief and of our own school mission statement. Collective Worship should play an active role in developing an inclusive attitude in the children themselves.

## **Health and Safety**

It is the responsibility of class teachers to follow school Health and Safety procedures

Lighted candles should only be used under adult supervision during Masses and a safety lighter should be safety stored away from children.

Class teachers should use battery operated candles in class, but real candles should be used at Mass.

This policy has been agreed following consultation with all staff and governors.

Signed (Principal): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Chair of Governors): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The policy will be reviewed every two years.

Next review: September 2022.