



**“God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in the Spirit
and in truth.” John 4:24**

In the light of our school mission statement to enable one another to;

'Grow in faith, have faith in growing'

We understand the prayer and worship life of our school community to be central to all we do.

Collective worship

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;
- 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 the seasons within the Church's year;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of scripture;
- Develop and celebrate skills of creativity

We understand worship to be a special act of occasion whose purpose is to show reverence to God. Collective Worship involves all members of the school coming together and participating in a mass, a liturgy or an assembly. We expect everyone to take an active part in worship.

In line with the 1998 Education Reform Act, which states that collective worship should be 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character', we normally base our liturgies on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Christian Church. However, we conduct our liturgies in a manner that is sensitive to the individual faith and beliefs of all members of the school.

While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian, we also hold assemblies that reflect other religious traditions that are represented in the school and wider community.

What is Liturgy?

Liturgy is a communal act in which we praise and worship God

Liturgy 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.

Liturgy is action and symbol; it speaks to the person, it involves all the senses: sight, touch, sound, taste and smell. Within school, we refer to the inclusion of these senses within a liturgy as 'See, Think, Hear, Do'.

Participating in liturgy forms our habits because we are ritual people and learn through repetition and copying.

In liturgy we discover the riches of prayer, through word and gesture, silence and stillness.

The purpose of adapting liturgy for pupils is to lead them into full, conscious and active participation in the wider liturgy of the Church.

Liturgy with children, as with adults, demands dignity, clarity and simplicity. Good liturgy touches our lives in such a way that we are renewed in our mission.

Liturgy/Worship in School

Good 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 George's liturgy and worship provides opportunities for the community to come together to celebrate and share.

We conduct all liturgies, masses or assemblies in a dignified and respectful way. We tell children that liturgy time is a period of calm reflection. We regard it as a special time and expect children to behave in an appropriate way. We ask them to be quiet and thoughtful and to listen carefully to the teachings and participate fully in prayer and hymns. We create an appropriate atmosphere by using music, gesture, symbolic actions, visual stimuli and artifacts and reflections to act as a focal point for the attention of the children.

On a Monday, our assembly is usually led by the Headteacher. All of these assemblies have a clear focus and include a mission for the children to follow during the week. All teachers then look out for those children who are particularly fulfilling this mission and they then receive the Head's award for succeeding in such a mission during the Achievement Assembly on a Friday. The themes for Head's assembly vary between events throughout the year and our school Gospel Values. The Chaplaincy Team also take the lead on one of these assemblies per half term.

On a Tuesday, we have worship within our classes which is often child led using the 'See, Think, Hear, Do' approach as developed through CPD alongside The Beckett School in Nottingham. The themes for this worship follow on from either the Head's assembly, a focus for that week or something that has arisen within class that the teacher feel necessary to include. Each class has their own liturgy box full of resources to enable pupils to lead one another in worship. They are also developing the use of the iPads to find appropriate Bible scripture using 'www.openbible.info'.

On a Wednesday, we have singing assembly led by the St. George's music team. These can focus upon necessary learning of hymns and songs for liturgies and masses as well as developing our bank of 'Psalms' to use within Mass. These can be both traditional and contemporary.

On a Thursday, classes take turns to lead an assembly for the whole school. These follow a rota for the foci which coincides with the focus for the Head's assembly and mission/learning for the week.

On a Friday, we have achievement assembly. The children are able to work towards three awards, the Headteacher award (based on the mission from Monday's assembly), The Pupil Choice Award (based on a topic chosen by the Learning Council) and the Teacher's choice award (for any topic the teacher feels appropriate). Friday's assembly offers an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements both in and out of schools. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school, which is that all children are valued and all achievements are recognized. Our school is a successful school and we shall celebrate the successes of all the children in assemblies.

We sometimes have our parish priest in for assemblies and he also comes in 2 or 3 times a term for mass. Our Chair of Governors plays an active role and participates in many of our Masses, assemblies and liturgies.

We invite parents to liturgies, masses and assembly and we encourage them to attend, as this promotes the community spirit of the school and is a practical demonstration of the way the home and school work together to support the achievements of our children. Parents who attend the Thursday class assembly are then welcome to join their child in class for the morning's lessons.

We welcome governors' attendance at our liturgies, masses or assemblies at any time. Holy days of Obligation are marked with a mass. St George's day is also marked with a mass in which each class is represented and a day of activities is planned to celebrate linked to St. George.

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 these seasons by fundraising for certain causes and providing prayer/activity for the children to attend. Prayer and assemblies at these times reflect the season. The Advent liturgy takes place as a whole school where each class takes responsibility for delivering a specific part of the liturgy. Foundation Stage and KS1 deliver a Nativity play to reflect the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. During the last week of the Spring term, the Lower Junior department put on a Passion play to enable pupils to reflect upon the events leading up to the resurrection. After Easter, there is a New Life liturgy or Mass which is planned to emphasise the importance of the resurrection. It is important that the children appreciate that Christmas Day and Easter Sunday are the beginnings of the seasons of Christmas and Easter.

Prayer

Children have a natural aptitude for prayer. They are open to God. They respond in joy, wonder, elation, anger or disappointment 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. 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 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 singing supports this, as does the availability of the 'Let us Pray' resources so that children may lead prayer and experience a variety of different ways of praying.

Daily prayer in the classroom

A daily experience of prayer – in classroom, assembly or elsewhere – is much more than just a legal requirement. It should be at the heart of every school. 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 time of need. Prayer within the classroom should take place before and after lunch, 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 display, collection of artifacts, 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 prayer 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.

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.

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. The school also provides a lead at celebrations within the parish and supports sacramental preparation and celebration through classwork and attendance of First Holy Communion celebrations. A post communion celebration is provided within school, led by the Parish Priest.

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

The priests of the parish provide chaplaincy for the school and have an active and special role in the sacramental life of the school. They visit school on a weekly basis – often several times per week.

Differentiation

A key principle of the Directory of 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 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 to our multi-cultural society, thus it is appropriate to incorporate a multi-cultural dimension to the worship and liturgy. A certain degree of sensitivity is required to avoid tokenism and enable authentication celebration. The Catholic Church is a world-wide community (the largest multicultural institution in the world) with a wealth of different cultural traditions, as is Christianity a world-wide faith. 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 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

- Something to 'see, think, hear and do'
- 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 Co-ordinator in liaison with the class/year group that is delivering. It is crucial that the priest or leader is briefed and provided with information about the structure of the celebration.

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 participation of the rest of the community.

It is important to evaluate all aspects of the liturgy including the preparation process in order to improve. Worship is a special living experience and evaluation needs to support its development.

The RE coordinator and senior leadership team evaluate liturgy across the school according to the yearly monitoring cycle. Class liturgies are monitored in each class at least once per term. Every whole school Mass is evaluated by the leadership team alongside the Worship team of the Chaplaincy team. Approximately half of whole school assemblies and acts of worship are evaluated by the RE coordinator.

As part of the work of the chaplaincy team, a group of pupils are specifically responsible for collecting pupil views using a 'sing, hear, think, do' proforma after each whole school Mass or liturgy. Parent views are collected through our 'Wonderful Worship' comment collection book.

Right of Withdrawal

As we are a Catholic School, and parents have applied to the school knowing this, we expect all children to attend assembly, mass and liturgies. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious worship.

Monitoring and review

It is the role of a named school governor with responsibility for religious education and collective worship to monitor the policy and practice of collective worship. The governor concerned liaises with the headteacher before reporting to the governors on religious education and collective worship.