



St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Prayer and Liturgy Policy

St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School is founded upon the Gospel values of Jesus Christ and, as such, we aim to bring to life these values in everything we do. Our school Mission Statement clearly sets out our commitment to the pupils of St. Vincent's:

Our mission is to serve the children of St. Vincent's as we grow together, building and deepening a community of faith and learning safe in the love of Christ.

By walking in the footsteps of Jesus every child, irrespective of culture, belief or race, will be treated as the unique person they are and, through respect and nurturing, will gain a love of learning and reach their individual potential.

Inspired by Our Lord's teaching and Catholic tradition we will provide a challenging and enriching curriculum for our children. Knowledge, raised aspiration, respect and value of self and others will equip them to move with growing confidence onto the next stage of life.

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 a 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



¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

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 than those which are specifically structured within 'Come and See' RE curriculum lessons.



The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of St. Vincent's Catholic 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. Vincent's Catholic Primary 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. Vincent's Catholic Primary 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.



² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

Planning, content and celebration

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure that references the Church's seasons, Come and See, feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial Day.

Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

The Timetable of Prayer and Liturgy is as below:

Every day is punctuated with prayer in the classroom: at the start of the day, at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Additionally, class prayer tables and prayer stations around the school award opportunities for spontaneous prayer throughout the school day.

Monday: 'Statement to Live By' whole school Collective Worship

Tuesday: Hymn Practice

Wednesday: KS1 liturgy + KS2 Class Collective Worship (child led)

Thursday: KS2 liturgy + KS1 Class Collective Worship (child led)

Friday: alternating whole school celebration-of-gifts and whole school liturgy

Mass is celebrated at *Our Lady and St. Vincent's Catholic Church* every half-term: led by pupils. Parents, carers and close family members are invited.

Whole School Liturgies take place throughout the year to mark significant dates in our liturgical calendar: Holy Week, Advent, etc.



Leading Prayer and Liturgy

As faith leader of the school, the Headteacher will plan and lead prayer and liturgy. The class teacher will lead class prayer and liturgy. Children are taught to plan and lead prayers according to their age.



Recording

Whole school prayer and liturgy is recorded on the school's annual Catholic Life Schedule. Both notification and recounts of many of our scheduled prayer and liturgy events are shared with parents and carers via the school's weekly newsletter. Class liturgies are detailed on class plans.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Prayer and liturgy is monitored using prayer and liturgy monitoring forms. Following monitoring, training needs will be identified and outcomes used to inform the school's CSED (Catholic Schools Evaluation Document).

Resources

Significant expenditure ensures the school and, subsequently, every class is well resourced with engaging and high-quality artifacts, objects and religious literature. Each class has its own selection of daily-use resources: holding crosses, prayer cube, scriptionery, Bible, cross, crucifix etc in addition to other items used for whole class and whole school liturgies e.g., fabric, statues etc.



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

In July, Y6 pupils retreat to Holy Island for two days of prayer and celebration: giving thanks for their academic and faith journey at St. Vincent's. St. Cuthbert and Cuddy's beads prove poignant moments in this important milestone.



³ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Other opportunities

Y6 pupils guide younger pupils through the Stations of the Cross in the Payer Garden during the season of Lent.

Reception pupils invite their parents/cares and close family members to join their Stay and Pray liturgy once every term.



Eucharist

Pupils and staff celebrate Mass with our Parish once every half-term: each Mass is led by a different year group, from Y1 to Y6. Pupils that have made their First Holy Communion receive this The Eucharist at Mass.

Y4 pupils are invited to enrol on the Sacramental Preparation programme: Reconciliation and The Blessed Eucharist.



The Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

The Headteacher, Ms Ness, is responsible for coordinating, resourcing and evaluating liturgy and prayer at St. Vincent's Catholic Primary School.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator, Ms Ness, 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 in this process.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Coordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for prayer and liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for prayer and liturgy included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that prayer and liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for prayer times
- Assisting the governors and headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to prayer and liturgy including withdrawal from Collective Worship
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
- Informing the headteacher of standards and developments in prayer and liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of prayer and liturgy
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards prayer and liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding prayer and liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the school chaplain
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development/Ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for prayer and liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for prayer and liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently