St James' Catholic Primary School



Policy for Prayer and Liturgy

Reviewed Autumn 2026

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St James', where we belong, believe and achieve.

Our educational aims

Belong- At St. James', we are one big, happy family together with Jesus. We are a place of love and acceptance. We are proud of being an integral part of our local community and wider world. Through a range of enriching experiences and with strong values instilled, we are able to grow personally, developing a deep-rooted sense of belonging.

Believe- Everyday, we follow in Jesus' footsteps and have faith in God who loves us. We show this by treating everyone with warmth, love, tolerance and respect. We offer forgiveness freely and learn from our mistakes. We also believe in ourselves, allowing us to develop our God given talents.

Achieve- Through our high quality bespoke curriculum, we show perseverance, creativity, skill and resilience. We are given every opportunity to achieve our goals and meet our full potential with love, guidance and support.

St James' Catholic Primary School, Skelmersdale.
Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Policy for Prayer and liturgy

Introduction:
Prayer and liturgy at St James' Catholic Primary School is the coming together of children and staff for the purpose of worshipping, praising, thanking, celebrating and deepening our relationship with God.

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school 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 school is a Catholic foundation and therefore, while respecting diversity of belief and commitment, it reflects and follows the traditions of the Church and has Christ at its heart. The worship includes all those who seek to explore and deepen their spiritual beliefs, enabling all members of the community to reflect their shared understanding.

All children and staff are involved and given an opportunity to respond in an act of worship each day. It gives everyone an opportunity to contemplate the mystery of God, the wonder of life, and to share our common aims and demonstrate our community spirit. On these occasions children are given opportunities to lead, participate and respond.

Legal Requirements:
We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils[1]. 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 Key Stages or classes. We understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that Prayer and liturgy and assembly are distinct activities.

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1 Parents have a right to withdraw their child from Prayer and liturgy. However, given the importance of Prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents need to 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.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including Religious Education. As a rule, Prayer and liturgy will take place on the school premises. However, the Governing Body has the discretion to allow acts of worship to be held elsewhere, for example for whole school Masses to take place in St Mary's Catholic Church, Skelmersdale, as part of our commitment to celebrate special occasions and to live out our Mission Statement by sustaining our home-school-parish links. In this school, as with any Voluntary Aided School, responsibility for arranging Prayer and liturgy rests with the Governing Body after consultation with the Headteacher.

The Place of Prayer and liturgy in the Life of our School:

We endorse the belief that 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.
- It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain.

We will continue to foster and deepen the children's personal relationship with God our Father daily in prayer. We do this by helping them become aware of God's presence in their lives and of His love for them by leading them to respond to Him in a manner suited to their age. This may be in one of the following ways:

- Prayer of silence;
- Spontaneous prayer;
- Praying through gesture or action;
- Formal prayer;
- Prayer through song, for example Taizé chanting or hymns.

Worship in this school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Prayer and liturgy

We believe that Prayer and liturgy in our school aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To promote and develop an appreciation of more active participation in prayer, liturgy and worship, relevant to the age and experience of each child;
- To contemplate something of the mystery of God;
- To consider spiritual and moral issues, in order to explore their own beliefs;
- To respond to and celebrate life;
- To experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit;
- To develop and sustain a common ethos and shared values;
- To grow in liturgical understanding and development;
- To reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition;
- To take time out to 'wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to'.
- To develop strong links with our parish community; To
- live out our school's Mission Statement.

Principles:

All acts of Worship in this school will:

- Celebrate the presence of God in our life and school community;
- Be a high quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Support learners' spiritual development;
- Give children 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 will:

- Be kept small wherever possible or appropriate, to help to personalise the experience;
- Be short and appropriately paced (one minute per year of a child's life should be spent on Prayer and liturgy)
- Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings;
- Seek to involve staff and learners at all times, in preparation and in leadership.

Organisation

In order to achieve the above, Prayer and liturgy is organised as follows:

EYFS: Daily class prayer and worship, concentrating on the weekly focus of the school. When the Eucharist is celebrated in school, the Reception class are invited to celebrate.

KS1 & KS2:

Monday:	Whole School Liturgy from 9:10a.m – 9:45:a.m led by Teaching staff. This is based 'Picture News'
Tuesday:	Class prayer and liturgy following Cafod children's liturgy.
Wednesday:	Class prayer and liturgy following Cafod children's liturgy.
Thursday:	Class prayer and liturgy Gospel value focus.
Friday:	Mission assembly and 'Spotlight' Assembly led by Headteacher 9:05a.m.

To develop liturgical understanding and development, pupils in different classes take on responsibilities in leading class Prayer and liturgy, as well as a child being the prayer leader for the week. The pupils will be supported by staff and given opportunity to evaluate this too.

Year 1- prayer leader lights the candle and hands Bible to teacher
Year 2- Prayer leader leads 3 times day prayers, lights candle, chooses song and hands Bible
Year 3- As year 2, write and leads prayers once a week
Year 4- As year 3 and reads Bible passage once a week
Year 5 and 6 Pupils lead the whole Prayer and liturgy session once a week.

Planning:

Prayer and liturgy in this school is planned separately from the R.E.D. topics studied. This is to provide the children with different experiences in their R.E. lessons as compared to Prayer and liturgy time. We follow the children's liturgy from Cafod and find this helps with children's understanding of the liturgical year.

Prayer and liturgy in each class will be delivered by the Class Teacher (or the group of children as forementioned). Each class can follow the school theme for that week, however if there is a topical news event they have the freedom to change their plan to address the event. The school theme should be displayed on the class focal point for Prayer and liturgy. At the beginning of each Half term, the co-ordinator gives out the themes for Prayer and Liturgy. The Bible reading is communicated on the staff briefing. The Prayer and liturgy Coordinator will be responsible for the effective communication of the

topics and resources available.

A liturgical structure for Prayer and liturgy
As with the Response section of Come and See, Acts of Prayer and liturgy should be organised in this way:

- Gather – how we come together, the setting, the environment
- Listen – the Word of God is proclaimed
- Response – the response to the Word leads into a time of prayerful reflection which may be accompanied by a symbolic action
- Going Forth – giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives

Class Assembly:
Each class throughout the school, including the EYFS unit, will be responsible for leading a Class Assembly once a year, based upon the topic they have been studying in our RE curriculum, Come and See. Each assembly will include opportunities to pray and sing together in worship. To strengthen our home/school links, we create invitations for families to come to these assemblies and join in together in the Prayer and liturgy. A rota for the Class Assemblies will be issued at the beginning of each academic year by the Prayer and liturgy Coordinator.

School Masses:
Masses will take place throughout the school year at either St Mary's Church or in our School Hall. The whole school will attend, including all staff, and members of the wider community will also be invited through invitation in the parish newsletter and in our own school newsletters. The liturgy will follow the readings of the day unless the Mass is for a specific theme or purpose for example, Leaver's Mass for Year 6. The children will be involved in reading, acting out, singing and praying throughout the Mass. Older children will be asked to write prayers to say. The children will also be instrumental in choosing which hymns to sing.

Display:
Each class should have a focal point for both R.E. and Prayer and liturgy. These may be the same area and should contain the class candle, a

bible, God's Story and Church's Story books. From Year Two upwards, children should have space in which to contemplate, reflect and pray within their classroom. They should be given opportunities in which to write prayers. Each classroom should have a crucifix displayed, in order to provide a focus for all learning and to uphold our Catholic values within everything we do in school. Each classroom should have displayed:

- Hail Mary; The Lord's Prayer; Lunchtime Prayer; Children's Creed;
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To incorporate our ethos and strengthen our faith, the Children's Creed should be recited regularly in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Each class should also say a Morning prayer, an evening prayer at the end of the school day and this should be displayed in the classroom.

In addition, Key Stages are to sing Grace Before Meals at lunchtime.

Themes for Prayer and liturgy

Themes for Prayer and liturgy will run alongside the liturgical year and will incorporate school themes and events.

Other celebrations:

- **October and May**
    - Months which are devoted to Mary. KS2 children should be taught the appropriate prayers connected to the Rosary.

- **Christmas**

  Each year, children from every class perform and retell the story of the Nativity:
    - **Nursery:** Nativity play
    - **Reception & KS1:** Nativity play
    - **KS2** Christmas Carol/ Concert Evening

- **Easter**
    - **Years 3, 4 and 5** Easter Play

  Summer
    - **Years 6** End of year production

Sacraments of Initiation

Children in Year Four who are baptised are invited to participate in the parish-wide Sacramental Programme, which involves the making of their first Holy Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation. The school supports the parish catechesis in a variety of ways and the school celebrates the children's achievements with celebratory Mass and party, in school following their First Holy Communion. This support extends to staff members being involved in the catechesis of Catholic children from across the town in St Mary's Church, Skelmersdale. Older children who, for whatever reason, did not make their Holy Communion in Year Four are still able to do so upon request.

Recording

Prayer and liturgy is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, learner groupings and resources { KS2 }
- through displays, a portfolio of examples, collections of learners' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos etc.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Once a term, the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all learners and whether learners are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship. This will be done through observation of Prayer and liturgy as the Headteacher and Prayer and liturgy Coordinator see fit.

Resources

Each class has their own prayer books and Bibles. School hymn practise takes place each week and these songs are then used in both class and school prayer and liturgy. Access to John Burland songs are kept alongside other worship songs on the sharepoint. Prayer resource list is on the school SharePoint. Teacher's add their own

resources to worship areas in keeping with the theme e.g. Rosary beads...

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Prayer and liturgy Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years. The Foundation Governor Deacon Anthony, in particular will play a most important role.

Date of adoption by Governing Body ……

Renewal Date……June 2027

Appendix 1

The Role of Leader for Prayer and liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for Prayer and liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer and liturgy which may at times form part of the school development plan
- Ensuring that Prayer and liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and family backgrounds of learners
- 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 on Children's Masses'
- Assisting the governors and Headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Prayer and liturgy

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing, on occasions, an Act of Prayer and liturgy
- Informing the Headteacher of standards and developments in Prayer and liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Acts 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 Parish Priest
- Liaison with Primary Christian Education Adviser from Archdiocese

Appendix 1 - Professional development/ongoing formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and ongoing formation for Prayer and liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses and reporting back
- 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

Appendix 2 - School Statement on Prayer and liturgy

It is the responsibility of every Catholic school to provide for all its members a vital experience of liturgy, worship and prayer which:

- names and celebrates God present and active in authentic human experience
- is educative
- is within our Catholic tradition

The purpose of these experiences is:

- to raise our mind and heart to God
- to develop the school as a community of faith
- to assist learners in developing their relationship with God, creation and the community of the Church
- to witness to the community and the wider world

Prayer and liturgy in our schools will be:

- properly planned
- adequately resourced
- recorded
- monitored
- evaluated

in order to ensure that the Prayer and liturgy experienced within the school is a relevant, meaningful and positive contribution to the religious, spiritual and moral development of all members of the community.

Review Date: June 2027