



ST. ALBAN'S
Catholic Primary School

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Policy for Collective Worship

Updated: October 2022

At St Alban's Catholic Primary School our Mission is:

To follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we love, live and learn together

Aim and Purpose of Prayer and Liturgy

At St Alban's Catholic School, Jesus Christ remains central to every aspect of school life. We aim to be a living, loving and sacramental community which is inspired by the life of Christ and the teachings of the Church, rooted in Gospel values. We hope that from the minute you enter our school you clearly see and feel that we are a Catholic community.

Acts of worship may take place at any time during the day. It may take the form of a single act of worship with the whole school community or separate acts of worship in school/class groups. When we gather for prayer and liturgy, we focus on the Word of God, we use symbol and ritual and we are open to God's presence among us. Prayer and liturgy is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be subsumed under any part of the curriculum including RE.

Prayer and liturgy in our school is an integral part of our ethos, aims and relationships, as Christian values permeate all aspects of school life and all relationships. It is a way of deepening our relationship with God together and individually. Through the many forms this worship takes we grow in spiritual, moral and liturgical understanding. We allow ourselves to grow in understanding of our living faith tradition and then develop a sense of wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ. It is through prayer and liturgy that we share each other's faith experiences and learn the skills of prayer and reflection. This is a very important aspect of life at St Alban's.

We aim to:

- To develop an awareness and understanding of the presence of God in each individual child's life and to encourage a personal response to that presence
- To allow each child to develop their conscience and make sound moral judgements based on commitment to following Christ
- To offer opportunities to deepen their faith and foster attitudes of care and respect for each other
- To live, experience and understand the Liturgical life of the Church through the Liturgical Year together with Solemnities and Feast days
- To promote sacramental life of Christian families and to encourage parents to take an active part in the preparation of their children for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation
- To foster school-parish links to ensure that our children remain exposed and committed to the Catholic faith experiencing liturgy and worship beyond and realms of the school curriculum
- To enable each child to participate and respond to liturgy and worship in an appropriate way to their age and maturity

Prayer and Liturgy at St Alban's School

The RE lead works closely with our school chaplaincy, staff and governors to ensure a cohesive response to the development of child and staff spirituality.

Prayer and liturgy takes place in school daily, staff and pupils are encouraged to pray with thoughtfulness and with respect through a variety of prayer experiences - whole school Masses and liturgies, assemblies and prayer services together with formal classroom and individual reflective prayer. This worship will follow the liturgical year and include appropriate feast days, it will also encompass Gospel Values and Virtues, Catholic Social Teaching, Children's Rights, world events and world's faiths to enable pupils to appreciate their place in society and respect those around them.

Prayer and Liturgy Preparation

Gathering

How will we begin / enter – to music? Create an atmosphere of prayer.

Use a 'gathering chant', come in procession.

Listening

Reading from scriptures. Pause at times for quiet contemplation.

Dramatise the readings / Use power point?

Responding

What do participants do? Quiet reflection, formal / informal prayer /respond to bidding prayers. Place stone at foot of cross etc.

Go Forth

What will I do to help those present take the message away with them – prayer card, picture, common prayer, action etc.

Jesuit Values and Virtues

Each half term, the children develop their understanding of two new virtues (as established in this form by the Jesuits) and strive to apply these to their everyday lives. An assembly at the beginning of each half term explains what they are and highlights examples of them from scripture. The virtues are displayed in all classes and around the school and children refer to them during acts of collective worship.

Understanding the Liturgical Calendar

We ensure that pupils are aware of the Liturgical Calendar and key events in the Church. The symbolism of colours is made clear from the earliest days in our school: purple for penance (seen during advent and Lent), red for Holy Spirit and martyrdom (seen at Pentecost), white, gold for important feasts, green for the ordinary times of the year, blue is associated with Mary.

Some months of the year have special foci. October is the month of the Rosary, November is the month when the Holy Souls (the deceased) are prayed for, May is the month when Mary is especially remembered and June is the month of the Sacred Heart when we remember especially the great love Jesus has for us.

Pupil and staff evaluation of Prayer and Liturgy

As we gather we will consider;

How do participants gather – is there a sense of order and respect? Is there a procession / movement to another area?

How is a prayerful atmosphere created? Is there an invitation to participate? Does everyone feel welcome?

Is the purpose of the act of worship clear and the focus explained?

As we listen we will consider;

Is the Scripture they are listening to suitable? Is the Word treated with reverence?

Has / have the reader(s) been well-prepared so as to engage the listener?

How is the 'reading' shared – role play, music, power-point etc.? Is it suitable for the participants?

Do participants listen attentively? Do they show good listening skills.

As we respond we will;

Is there maximum participation? Is time given for individual silent reflection?

Do pupils pray / respond wholeheartedly? Are adults good role models?

Do all adults present participate?

Are participants invited to respond in an appropriate manner? (in a variety of ways?)

As we go forth we will consider;

Does Worship conclude appropriately? Do participants leave Collective Worship in a suitable, orderly manner?

How are they enabled to take the message away with them?

After each act of Prayer and Liturgy, we should be considering:

Was it a positive, enriching religious experience for all present?

Has this worship enhanced the spiritual and / or moral development of those present?

Was the time and content appropriate for the age, ability and background of the children?

Did all parts of worship help to develop the Liturgical formation of participants?

Was it well-organised, led and presented?

Was there a sense of community, common ethos and shared values?

Questionnaires are completed by staff, children and parishoners throughout the year regarding the quality of collective worship.

Mass

Pupils celebrate Mass together with our parents and parish community on a weekly basis. Pupils play an active part in each Mass, through reading praying, singing, altar serving and taking part in offertory processions. Each class takes it in turn to lead and prepare the celebration based on the liturgical year, focusing on solemnities, feast days and memorials of saints important to the children.

Pupils and their families are also invited to participate in year group Mass and Sacramental Enrollment Masses at the parish (St Dunstan's) 10:30am Sunday Mass, which supports their journey of faith as members of our wider Church Community.

Assemblies

There are two weekly assemblies. Our Monday, we have a high-quality scripture assembly which focuses upon the liturgical year with the relevant liturgy of the word, is supported by the help of our House Captains. Included in this assembly are celebrations of the children's God-given talents and achievements in and out of school (Shining Stars and Champions of Christ).

On a Wednesday afternoon, class teachers and senior leaders lead a second whole school prayer and liturgy assembly that celebrates important feast days, Gospel Virtues, Catholic Social Teaching Principles and any other current affairs.

Each class will lead a liturgical prayer service once a year to which parents will be invited. The children will also have the opportunity to lead a prayer service in their classes weekly which they have ownership to plan and lead.

Formal and traditional prayer

Pupils are encouraged to develop their individual prayer life through daily participation in our formal prayers such as our school prayer, morning prayer, grace before and after meals and evening prayer. It is important that we enable pupils to participate in community of the Church through learning our traditional Church prayers. Formal prayers, appropriate to the age and maturity of the year group are taught through the RE Strategy, each class teacher a copy of the prayers that their class are expected to learn in each year.

Hymn Practice

The pupils participate in weekly hymn practices, where they learn Mass responses and sing both traditional and modern hymns. Music is central part of worship in our school and hymns are used in all areas of worship from supporting themes within Masses and assemblies to providing atmosphere through chants and reflective music in collective worship. The children enjoy singing and a number of them sing in the school choir, which has a very important part to play in Mass and liturgical celebrations.

Prayer Bags

Each class has a focus Prayer Bag created by the school. These are taken home and shared so that through examination of text, artefact and prayer the family unit has the opportunity to pray together on a theme familiar to the child. The bags appropriate scripture passages, formal school prayer, traditional Church but also introduce families to class saints and inspirational figures within the Church past and present. This can also help support the faith and sacramental development of our pupils.

Sacred Spaces

We have dedicated sacred spaces throughout the school, ie. Our prayer garden and grotto. Each classroom has a prayer focus area to help pupils in their prayer life and is used in acts of class worship. It has reminders of liturgical themes and colours as well as class saints and inspiration figures, it also contains traditional prayers and RE curriculum foci.

Prayer Groups

Prayer groups give the children more ownership and understanding of this central aspect of their faith. Our group of pupils volunteers work with the staff to prepare for, plan and celebrate school liturgies.

They lead Morning Prayer in their class once a week. They monitor prayer tables in classrooms and the prayer areas around school. They also help oversee the class prayer bags which go home with each child for one week each year.

Vocational Life

Every year, we hold Vocations Week. Speakers from all different walks of life talk to the children about their vocation, both spiritually and career wise, which enables the children to be inspired on what they may use their God-given talents for. This is used to add depth to our RE teaching and inspire our worship.

Class Saints

Each year group has a saint which can be used as a focus for our prayer and spiritual development. They complete work about the saint and celebrate their feast day. They often refer to their class saint in times of class prayer.

Retreats and Visits

We have regular support in school from One Life Music who engages in central Sacramental or liturgical ideas and allows the children to reflect and respond through music and prayer. Each year we have whole school retreat as well as a staff retreat but also our Sacramental year groups experience class retreat as part of their journey of faith.

Pupils also have the opportunity to visit places of religious and spiritual significance such as St. Chad's Cathedral. These visits help pupils understand their faith history experience how others worship.

Parish Links

As part of the Church community, the school has strong links with the parish. Pupils and staff join the parish for regular Masses as well as parish celebrations. Our parish priests also visit the school regularly and lead assemblies.

Links with Parents

Liturgies and celebrations and events related to the Catholic Life of our **school are shared in school newsletters and on twitter and are published** on the school website. Parents and families are regularly invited to join the school community in Masses, assemblies, Inspire Workshops and fundraising activities.

Parents of pupils in Sacramental year groups are also invited to Sacramental Meetings and Commitment Masses as part of the

Sacramental Preparation Programme. Parents and families also support the school in being able to offer an extensive range of educational visits to various places of worship.

Pupils in each class also have the opportunity to take home a Prayer Bag, promoting opportunities for children and their families to talk and pray together.

Sacramental Preparation

Parents are involved in preparing the children in Year 3 for the sacrament of Reconciliation and their First Holy Communion. There are three workshops throughout the year and these are followed by Masses, specifically for these children and they participate fully.

In preparation for Confirmation, parents and sponsors are actively involved. There is a series of workshops which the pupils attend with their families. There is also an inscription Mass which involves the pupils, parents, sponsors, teachers and the parish, where the children commit themselves to the process of making their Confirmation, in due course.

The school supports this sacramental preparation through retreats and visits and pupils share their experiences with the school community through prayer and assemblies.

Equal Opportunities

The fair and equal treatment of all individuals irrelevant of race, creed, disability or gender, are integral to the Gospels' Revelations and the Church's message and is central to our school mission statement. All children are given equal access to the Religious Education curriculum, promoting their understanding to their full potential.

A variety of prayer and worship activities are used to try to meet all children's different needs e.g. whole School, whole class, group, pair and individual prayer, also different styles of prayer from formal liturgies to private reflective prayer.

Governing Body

RE together with prayer and liturgy is always a key part of the School Development Plan, and is reported upon termly as part of the Head Teacher's Report to Governors. Governors are also invited to conduct learning walks and join with other members of the whole school community in the celebration of collective worship, Mass and attend INSET Days relating to the Catholic Life of the School.

Monitoring and Review of this Policy

The RE leaders will monitor the implementation of the policy. All staff will be involved in evaluating the effectiveness of this policy in helping to improve standards of collective worship within the school. This evaluation will inform the process for reviewing this policy. Pupils will be involved in reviewing and evaluating liturgy in school with the RE leaders

To be reviewed (annually): October 2023