



St. Mary's R.C. Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

Prayer and Worship Policy

(updated Jan 2022)

Vision: 'A Journey to Excellence'

We believe that each child is made in the image and likeness of God therefore we develop the 'whole child' to reach their individual potential. We have high expectations and celebrate success both academically and socially. We aim to provide an outstanding Catholic education so that we can make a valuable contribution to the community in which live and serve.

Mission statement

'We are happy living and learning in God's Friendship.'

Policy Aims

1.1. The aims and purpose of collective worship, while reflecting the aims of our Mission Statement are:

- To provide an opportunity for children to worship God
- To provide opportunities for spiritual development
- To offer opportunities for traditional and individual prayers, reflection and spontaneous intercessions
- To teach the children how to worship
- To guide the children on their faith journey
- To enable the children to consider spiritual and moral issues
- To provide the children with opportunities to explore their own beliefs
- To encourage participation and response
- To develop in children a sense of community spirit
- To promote a common ethos with shared values and to reinforce positive attitudes
- To include music, drama, art, dance and other areas of the curriculum within our collective worship

2. Prayer

2.1. At St Mary's we value the importance of prayer to enable the children to develop their growing and maturing relationship with God. Prayer is developed all around school: in assembly, in classrooms and in areas around school, such as the whole school prayer corner.

2.2. As well as learning and saying the formal prayers of the Church, we encourage all children to pray informally by using their own words, and to reflect in silence.

2.3. Each classroom has its own personalised prayer corner and children are also encouraged to use the whole school prayer corner, created by the GIFT Team, as a space to pray and reflect.

2.4. Prayer corners adorned with a candle are used as a focus for a few moments of quiet reflection at various points during the school day. Children are encouraged to compose their own prayerful reflections and meditations about experiences in their daily lives. In this way their awareness of God's presence and their relationship with Him is thereby constantly strengthened and renewed.

2.5. A crucifix is displayed in all rooms.

3. Collective Worship

- 3.1. At St Mary's we understand worship to be a special act or occasion with the purpose of showing reverence to God. Collective worship involves members of the school gathering and participating together taking an active part in assembly. Recently these have been happening virtually.
- 3.2. While the majority of acts of worship in our school are Christian and Catholic in nature, based on the teachings of Christ and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, we also have assemblies that reflect and respect other religious traditions.

4. Organisation of Collective Worship

- 4.1. We provide the opportunity for collective worship to take place within class on a daily basis with a collective worship longer session at least once a week. Due to restrictions, the Head Teacher conducts our whole school assembly virtually. KS2 Assemblies are also done virtually whereas KS1 assemblies do take place in the school hall as social distancing can still be maintained.
- 4.2. Assemblies are held in a respectful manner and we expect children to behave in an appropriate way; being quiet and thoughtful, listening carefully in a calm atmosphere, participating fully in prayers and hymns.
- 4.3. The themes of Assemblies follow the Liturgical Calendar, Festivals, Church reading, Feast Days and topics being studied by the children which are linked to our Catholic traditions if possible. Sometimes the themes of our assemblies are related to topics that we teach in the school curriculum.
- 4.4. Our Assemblies are also an opportunity to reflect the achievements and learning of the children both in and out of school. We encourage the children to participate in Assemblies by showing their work to other children and raising issues which have been discussed in class. Once restrictions are lifted the GIFT Team and School Council deliver assemblies throughout the year, and have a special role for introducing a special event such as 'Friendship Week'.
- 4.5. Assemblies offer an opportunity to acknowledge and reward children for their achievements. They play an important part in promoting the ethos of the school.
- 4.6. When restrictions are lifted parents, Governors and Parish community will be invited to attend services held at our school throughout the year. This is a practical demonstration of the way the home, school and parish work together to support the achievements of our children.

5. Implementation of collective worship and prayer

5.1. St Mary's aims to promote rich and meaningful experiences of collective worship and prayer that are appropriate to pupils' needs, ages and interests by:

- Presenting displays that promote and enhance spiritual ideas and thoughts
- Encouraging pupils to reflect and contemplate on their thoughts, feelings and beliefs
- Using artefacts, stories, resources, music, art, drama and speakers/visitors to engage pupils' interest
- Planning for creative opportunities for children to engage with prayer and worship
- Involving pupils in different experiences of worship, e.g. silence, prayer, rituals, shared or written prayers, etc

6. Pupil Development in Prayer and Worship

6.1. St Mary's has a systematic approach to developing skills in Prayer and Worship which aims to develop and extend pupils ability to pray and listen to God. This structured programme aims to ensure we are developing skills in our pupils which are age appropriate and allows them chance to explore and be creative, whilst developing their prayer relationship with God.

6.2. Teachers are to ensure that children take more of a lead in prayer and worship sessions.

6.3. After restrictions are lifted the GIFT Team will lead prayer sessions at lunchtime.

7. Right of Withdrawal

7.1. We expect children to attend assembly. However, any parent can request permission for their child to be excluded from attending religious worship and alternative arrangements will be made for the supervision of the child during assembly time. This complies with the 1944 Education Act and was restated in the 1988 Education Reform Act.

7.2. The Headteacher keeps a record of all children who withdraw from Collective Worship.

8. Outcomes

8.1. As a Catholic school, we enjoy gathering and praying together as this strengthens us as a community. We provide the children with ways and strategies to pray with the aim of helping them to develop their own personal relationship with God. We promote prayer and worship as a special, valuable and enjoyable experience in which we can speak and listen to God individually and collectively.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1. This policy is reviewed every two years by the RE Leader, governing body and the Headteacher.

9.2. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

9.3. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all process and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.

9.4. This document will be updated in January 2024 or when Covid restrictions are lifted.

Signed: *L.Rothwell*

(On behalf of the staff)

Signed:

(On behalf of the governors)