



## Prayer & Liturgy

Date	Review Date	Coordinators	Nominated Governor
October 2023	October 2025	Jade Cahill	

Our Prayer & Liturgy Policy is very much a reflection of our Mission Statement. At Our Lady & St Joseph’s Primary School Our Mission is to foster the Gospel values of Jesus Christ and provide a high standard of education with equality of opportunity for all.

We aim to achieve this by...

- Creating a safe and loving environment for the whole school community.
- Enabling everyone to grow spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically.
- Valuing each member of our community by recognising the gifts and needs of every individual.
  - Encouraging self discipline and treating everyone with respect and courtesy at all times.
  - Working in open and honest partnership with families, the Church and the wider community

*This policy should be read in conjunction with the RE handbook and RE Policy*

### 1. The Nature of Prayer & Liturgy

Christian worship in a Catholic school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. It is our loving response in work 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.

**Definitions** - Collective Worship is a term used in legislation in this country but is not a phrase we would readily use in a Catholic context. “Prayer” and “Liturgy” are terms more commonly used.

**Liturgy** - Liturgy literally means ‘work of the people’ and points to the fact that something else is going on beyond prayer. It is formalising of worship at the heart of which is symbol and action. The four-part structure of Gather-Word-Response to the Word-Mission is common to many liturgies – it is one way of understanding the structure of the Mass.

**Prayer** - Once the early fathers of the church described prayer as “the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or requesting of good things from God”. These words illustrate why in this Catholic school we begin and end each session of the day in prayer. Prayer may be an individual experience, or if it is an activity with others may form part of an act of worship.

### 2. The place of Prayer & Liturgy in the life of our school

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. However, worship at OLSJ is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition. It is an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all gain at a level of faith background appropriate to them.

In this voluntary aided Catholic school, responsibility for arranging collective worship rests with the governing body after consultation with Headteacher.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be considered as part of our religious education lessons (for time purposes).

Prayer & Liturgy at OLSJ 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 which school may be their first and only experience of church.
- Those from other Christian backgrounds.
- Those from other faith backgrounds.
- Those from other backgrounds who are admitted to the school under the categories agreed by the Governing Body as the admission authority.

### 3. The aims of Prayer & Liturgy

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

- to contemplate something of the mystery of God;
- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues;
- to explore their own beliefs;
- to respond to and celebrate life;
- to experience a sense of belonging and develop community spirit;
- to develop a common ethos and shared values;
- to enrich religious experience;
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development;
- to reinforce 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'.

### 4. Principles of Prayer & Liturgy

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- give Glory and honour to God;
- be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- 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.

Celebration of the Word is planned:

- following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship;
- involving consultation with appropriate parties and reference to school aims and policies;
- with flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community;
- to develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than; always participating or contributing to something prepared for them.

Celebration of the Word is recorded:

- on a liturgy timetable to assist staff with planning, by informing them of themes and leaders;
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs and class collective worship planners where appropriate.

Each week, a group of children in each class lead a collective worship session with their peers. Children reflect on gospel stories as well as lead prayers, songs and other chosen activities. The children select the Bible reading that they want their session to be focused upon. They may choose a text related to the liturgical calendar, their class saint or a theme they would like their class to reflect upon e.g friendship, honesty or forgiveness.

The Celebration of the Word sessions are structured around the following parts:

**Gather** - children gather in a circle with a focus area. They can use candles, rosary beads and other religious artefacts. Some children may choose to hold their session in the forest area in our school.

**Word** - children chose a Bible reading linked to their prayer theme

**Response** - Children choose one or two ways to respond to the reading. For example, they ask each child to write down a prayer or a promise and put each paper together in a jar. They could place this jar on the class prayer table as a constant reminder for the children throughout the week.

**Mission** - Children choose a way to go forth, sharing the Good News and following God's mission in their everyday lives. This can be telling others what they've heard, writing a poem or raising awareness.



## 5. Resources

- Resources supporting the planning of liturgies, both Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic.
- Set liturgies from *Ten Ten* or specific feast days (on Diocesan website).
- Mark 10 Mission
- Word on Wednesday
- Bibles
- Prayer books
- Music
- Pictures and artefacts
- Candles and drapes

*Resources are held centrally or in classrooms*

## 6. Monitoring and Evaluation

The school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it fulfils the aims of our policy in an updated and appropriate manner.

The Role of the Co-ordinator is to:

- plan and present an overview of Liturgy for the year;
- plan the liturgy for whole school occasions;
- support colleagues in the implementation of the Collective Worship Policy;
- monitor progress and advise the Headteacher on whatever action is needed;
- take responsibility for the purchase of central resources for liturgies;
- keep up to date with developments in liturgy and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate.

## 7. Parish & Family Celebrations

On these occasions of worship, the children, or groups of children, play an active role offering and sharing their celebration with the parish family or their own families. They include:

- Beginning and End of Term Masses.
- Masses for Holy days.
- The Feast of St Joseph
- Ash Wednesday Mass
- Stations of the Cross / Lenten Liturgy
- Preparation for, and celebration of, the sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.
- Christmas Performances
- Harvest Mass
- Reconciliation Services
- May Celebration for Mary the Mother of Jesus

## 8. Celebration in the wider Church community

These occasions allow the children to become aware of the wider church community, furthering their sense of belonging to a universal church worshipping in communion.

Occasions include:

- Diocesan Celebrations
- Making a positive contribution through fundraising.



**9. Key Stage Celebrations**

These allow the different ages of children to learn and pray together at a level appropriate to their development and to celebrate events and achievements special to their key stage.

Whole School Assemblies

Monday – Gospel Assembly

*Gospel Assembly is led by the Headteacher or REC, explaining and reinforcing the weekend's Gospel message.*

Wednesday – Class Celebration of the Word

Thursday – Individual Class assembly (see timetable)

Weekly Hymn Practice

**10. Individual Class Celebrations**

The day begins and ends with prayer. This usually includes a morning and night prayer alongside the other forms appropriate to the occasion and the age of the children.

As a School we are developing the area of Classroom Liturgy. The children participate weekly in class liturgies. Children are involved in the preparation of their class liturgies, the level of organisation depending on the age of the children and the theme of the liturgy.

**11. Monitoring this policy**

This Prayer & Liturgy policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and the co-ordinator at least annually, or more frequently, if needed. At each review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.

<b>Headteacher:</b>	Aoife O’Grady	<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Chair of Governing Body:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	



