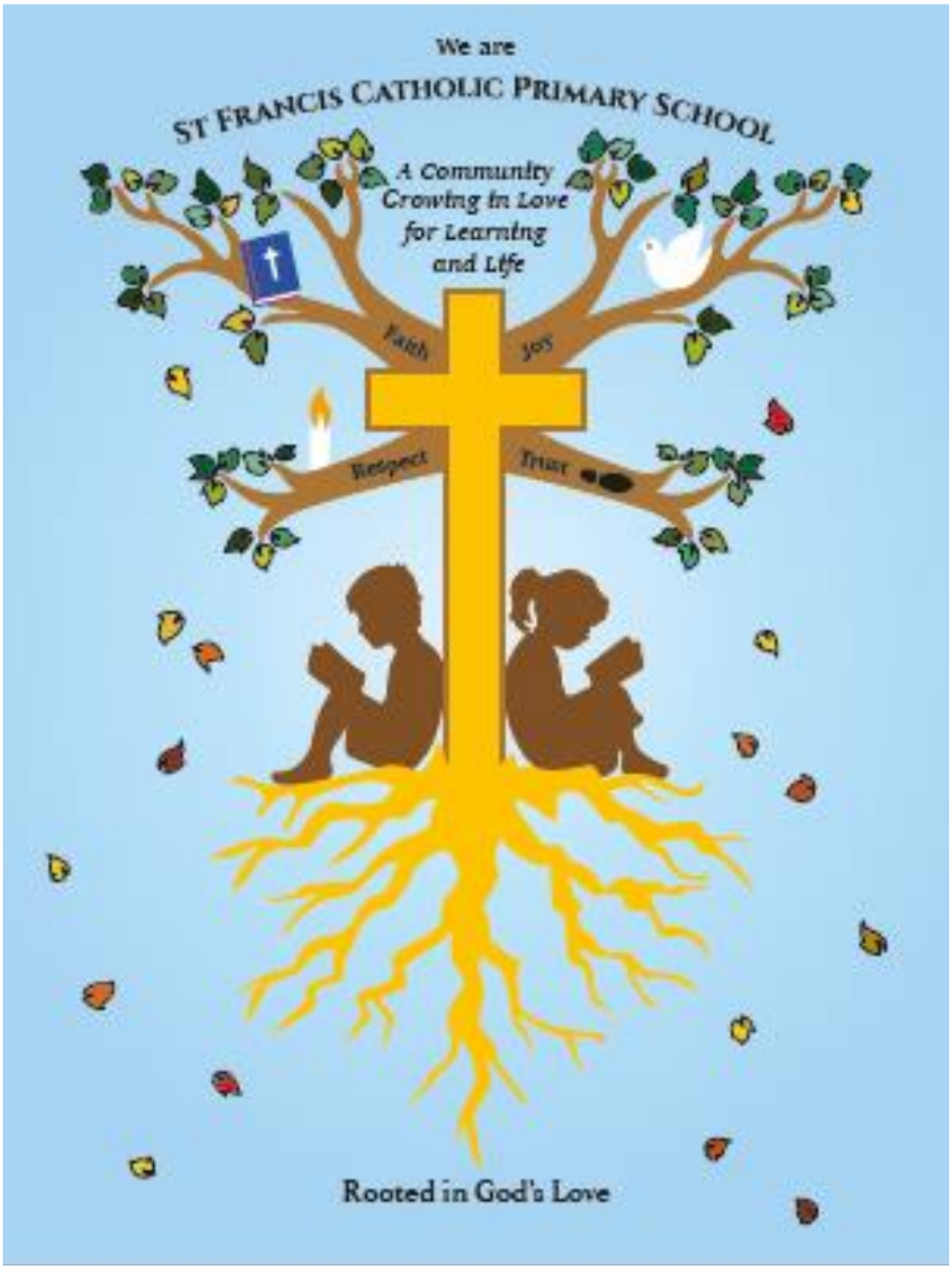
St Francis Catholic Primary School
Policy for Prayer and Liturgy



The Nature of prayer and Liturgy

At St Francis, school prayer, worship and liturgical celebrations are central to the life of our school and our catholic nature. It is a way of celebrating our faith and deepening our relationship with God through prayer, reflection, praise and celebration. Our staff ensure that children are provided with opportunities to develop their spirituality and a close relationship with God through acts of worship. A variety of opportunities for worship are provided, including individual prayer, group prayer in both formal and informal styles and settings, and the celebration of the Eucharist which is the centre of worship for the Catholic community. The worship of the school is based on promoting Catholic Christian values. As such, the contributions of staff, pupils, Parish Priest and other visitors are valued highly. Opportunities for worship are linked with Feast Days and with the liturgical seasons of Advent, Lent, Christmastide and Easter.

Statutory Requirements

The law requires all maintained schools and academies:

•Provide daily Prayer and Liturgy for all pupils (Section 70, 1988 Education Act);
•That Acts of Prayer and Liturgy are not to be designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school this means that times of Prayer and Liturgy are not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum time for Religious Education;
•Recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their pupils from Prayer and Liturgy.
In addition: Foundation governors in voluntary aided Catholic schools have a statutory responsibility to preserve and develop the religious character of their schools and Governors in Catholic academies give a written commitment to do the same.

Parents are permitted, by law, to request that their child is withdrawn from receiving all or part of Prayer and Liturgy. This request should be made in writing to the Headteacher.

The Place of Collective Worship in the Life of our School

We hold the belief that Collective Worship takes into account the religious and educational needs of all who share in it:
• those who form part of the worshipping community in our parish
• those for whom school may be their first and only experience of church
• those from other Christian denominations – or none
• those from other faith backgrounds

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy
Prayer and liturgy in St Francis 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 worship in this school will:
• give glory to God
• be a quality educational activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character, including aspects of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole person
•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. Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.
• At an age-appropriate level, pupils lead prayer and liturgy. Children are taught, how to organise liturgy through gather, listen, respond/reflect and mission/go forth. Spontaneous prayer is encouraged.

Planning, Content and Celebration

Assemblies, liturgies and Masses are seen as sacramental units of the school life and all members of the community are expected to take an active role in preparation, celebration and thanksgiving.

Liturgies and Masses

Liturgies and Masses follow a termly timetable drawn up by the head teacher/leader/parish priest

All KS2 classes prepare a class Mass to which parents and friends are invited. Throughout the year all pupils prepare assembly for the Wednesday Word, whole school Masses and liturgies for Holy Days of Obligation, termly celebrations of reconciliation for KS2 and other major liturgical days or events; like Harvest, CAFOD days, October – Rosary, November – All Souls, Advent Wreath Service, Lent, Holy Week, May – Crowning of Our Lady, and St. Francis Day and liturgies to which parents and friends are invited, which follow the pattern of gather, listen, respond, go forth.

Copies of past liturgical celebrations are stored on the staff shared area of the school curriculum site and are available for teachers' preparation.

Liturgies will include:
- Introduction, which explains theme of service
- Opening prayer and sign of the cross led by Celebrant
- Reading/s from the Bible adapted for pupils reading and may include acting to support the pupils' spiritual development.
- Response from pupils can either take the form of prayers or poetry
- Explanation of reading by Celebrant
- Formal prayers of church – Our Father/Hail Mary/Glory Be
- Hymns interspersed appropriately.

School Masses will include:

- Introduction, which explains theme of service
- Opening prayer and sign of the cross led by Celebrant
- Penitential Rite – examination of conscience followed by an opportunity to say sorry either in words or song
- Can sing Gloria at this point BUT not in Advent or Lent
- First reading from the Old Testament or Letters
- Responsorial Psalm in word or song
- Gospel can be introduced by song e.g. Halle BUT not in Advent or Lent
- Gospel introduced and read by Celebrant (may involve acting by pupils)
- Explanation of reading by Celebrant
- Response from pupils – Bidding prayers followed by Hail Mary
- Our Father (followed by Lamb of God and Holy Communion)
- Closing prayer and blessing led by Celebrant
- Hymns interspersed appropriately.

Class Assemblies

Each class will prepare a celebration of the word for the whole school to participate in on a Wednesday, using the Wednesday Word resources. This gives the children the opportunity to share their response to scripture with the school, through prayer, art, mime, scripture, music dance etc

Assemblies

Monday Whole School at 10.15 am led by Head teacher/Deputy Headteacher exploring gospel values and a deeper understanding of Catholic Social Teaching (CST)principles.
Wednesday Whole School at 10.15 am Wednesday Word.
Friday Whole School at 2.40 pm Celebration
Class worship/prayer must be held on other days lasting for about 10-15 minutes, and children or class teacher may lead them.

Visits and visitors

As part of curriculum, we encourage appropriate visits for the children in order for them to have first-hand experiences and gain greater knowledge of other faiths. Visitors to the school are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge – their role is to educate, not to evangelise.

Prayer and Reflection

Prayer and liturgy always include a time of prayer and/or reflection. A range of prayers are used including the Lord's Prayer, the School Prayer, traditional Catholic prayers, prayers written by the children including spontaneous prayer. They are introduced in an appropriate manner with a short time of quiet. Prayers are said in class at Lunchtime (grace) and the end of the day. They are also said at the beginning of the day in prayer and liturgy or in class.

Each morning, the pupil RE team lead the daily rosary in the school chapel with the support of a member of staff. This includes opportunities to listen to prayer said in other languages spoken in the school. During lunch and break times they encourage other children to join them in quiet reflection time in the school prayer garden.

Every child has the opportunity throughout the year to take home and contribute their own personal prayers to the class prayer book. As well as the book, inside the bag is a set of rosary beads, a small cross and candle and an example of a short service that can be held as a family. The bag is used as a way of connecting the prayer life of the school and home through encouraging the children to lead their own liturgy with their families and sharing their spiritual experience with their peers.

Music and Song

In music, we recognise that there is rich variety to be enjoyed. The social and cultural mix of the pupils at St Francis has to be recognised and their needs met. It is important that no cultural group is made to feel excluded from worship.

Organisation and Leadership

The Local Governance Committee members and Head Teacher are responsible for ensuring that there are daily timetabled opportunities for whole school, class and key stage group Worship. The school must ensure:

•That there is a named person who is responsible for organising Prayer and Liturgy across the school;
•That Prayer and Liturgy, in the form of prayer or liturgy, happens for all pupils daily;
•That all pupils are able to access the prayer and liturgy offered within the school day;
•that Prayer and Liturgy is well resourced, both in regard to content and the continued professional development of those planning and leading, this includes enabling pupils to plan and lead;
•That there is regular and comprehensive monitoring of Prayer and Liturgy which clearly demonstrates the impact it has on the school's Catholic mission.

Review Date: Sept 2026

Next Review Date: Sept 2028