



**St Augustine of Canterbury  
Catholic Primary School**

# Prayer and Liturgy Policy

DATE: January 2024

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*“Created by God to love and learn”*

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## Document Information

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## PRAYER AND LITURGY POLICY

### Mission Statement

St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School provides an education that inspires and nurtures God's children to succeed to their full potential as we are...

*"Created by God to love and learn"*

#### **1.1 Our school values are:**

**Respect:** of ourselves and our neighbour, both near and far from every culture and faith

**Love:** of everyone and everything God created

**Humility:** knowing that we are one of many and avoid selfishness

**Courage:** in the face of the unknown or meeting a new challenge or just having a go!

**Responsibility:** for our actions or inaction

**Compassion:** showing care and support for others

**Perseverance:** never giving up

**Service:** supporting others by giving our time, organising charitable activities

**Honesty:** in thought and deed

**Curiosity:** a pre-requisite for learning about the world about us

#### **1.2 The nature of Prayer and Liturgy**

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 in relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Prayer and Liturgy is crucial to the spiritual life of the school and to the pupil's moral and spiritual development.

#### **1.3 Prayer**

Prayer is essentially a deeply personal communication with God who is seen as a friend and listener. Helping children to pray is a fostering of that communication. To do so, parents, teachers and priests walk with the children on their journey in faith and give witness to their own deep and special relationship with God. Being able to pray in our community is central to our mission.

Our children experience and explore a variety of methods of prayer, such as:

- Traditional learned prayer in a group setting
- Formal/informal prayer appropriate to the Liturgical cycle
- Prayer from scripture
- Individual, quiet prayer
- Spontaneous group prayer
- Prayer using images, music, art, nature, technology
- Silent group meditation
- Prayer in song

- Prayer for others (petitionary prayer)
- Imaginative prayer
- Prayer using movement/gestures

Prayer should be a real turning to God for all situations in the classroom. There is, of course, a need for the basic formal prayers, such as 'The Sign of the Cross' and the 'Lord's Prayer' but the key priority is to encourage the children to be comfortable in prayer and to see prayer opportunities as natural. Later when prayer is seen as being integrated into each day, more formal ways of praying can be encouraged so that each pupil can explore and develop ways of praying that are suited to their personality and needs. Traditional prayers should be taught to all pupils, however, we are guided by Clifton Diocese' Progression of Prayer and Liturgical development through the school.

#### 1.4 Liturgy and Liturgical Prayer

We believe that Prayer and Liturgy at St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School aims to provide opportunity for all pupils and staff:

- To contemplate something of the mystery of God and the reality of God with us
- To deepen our relationship with God
- To learn and love traditional Catholic prayers
- To understand that prayer comes in many forms
- To know and be familiar and confident with responses in liturgy, including the Mass
- 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 and virtues
- To enrich and widen religious experience in our own Faith and respect other faiths
- To reinforce positive attitudes through living and sharing the Gospel
- To participate fully
- To develop the skills of: reverence, contemplation, reflection, interpretation, empathy and meditation
- To take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to' so developing the children's experiences in Awe and Wonder through the Mysteries of God.

At St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, all children are welcomed to participate in daily worship. We gather together at Masses, liturgies, and through whole-school and in-class worship.

• Our Catholic faith is central to day-to-day life of our school and all aspects of the curriculum, and pupils are encouraged to recognise the importance of their faith and they respond to all forms of prayer and liturgy with respect and reverence. We have a rich liturgical life in that the experiences we provide are wide ranging and take place in school, out of school, in Church and the wider community, and engage and involve pupils, parents, staff, governors and the parish.

#### 1.5 The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of our School

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
- Those from other faith backgrounds – or none.

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Worship at St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

## **1.6 Principles**

All Acts of Worship in St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary 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.

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
- Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings.

## **2.0 Organisation of Prayer and Liturgy at St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School:**

Prayer and Liturgy takes place daily in each class throughout the day; this can be formal or informal and can be organised and led by the pupils. It also takes place formally each week:

### Whole school Prayer

Led by the Head or Assistant Head are based on Sunday's Gospel. They are planned to be interactive sessions to engage pupils across Key Stages.

### Gospel Values

Led by the class teachers on a rota basis, who will focus on exploring a termly school Gospel Value at an age appropriate level. A variety of resources can be used to support this, including CAFOD resources.

### Class Reflection / Prayer Sessions

These prayer sessions are planned and led by the children in KS2 and staff in KS1 and follow the structure of Gather, Word, Respond, Mission.

### Celebration Assemblies

We celebrate class and individual pupil achievements in school that week. We also have class assemblies led by the children. Teachers note in our 'golden book' children that have demonstrated at least one of our school values that week. Children are awarded a certificate and sticker to share with family at home.

### Hymn Practice

The school arranges weekly hymn practice as an opportunity to learn new hymns to celebrate the Liturgical year. Hymns are recognised as another form of prayer.

### Masses

We celebrate Mass together as a whole school. There is always a Mass at the start of academic year as well as on all Holy Days of Obligation. We mostly hold our Masses in church and invite Parishoners. Father Barnabas also celebrates Class Masses (KS2) or Liturgies (KS1 and Reception) with each class in the school during the year. These have a particular theme or focus relevant to the class.

### Voluntary Worship and Retreats

During Lent we hold a whole school 'stations of the cross' reflection, for individual classes. Father Barnabas leads us in our Ash Wednesday service in school and we add opportunities for prayer and reflection on our school residential trips in Years 4 and 6.

## **2.1 Recording**

Collective worship is recorded:

- on a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos, etc

## **2.2 Monitoring and Evaluation**

At least once a year the school's provision of worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of all pupils and whether pupils are making progress in acquiring skills and abilities in organising and leading worship. The link Governor for R.E and prayer life will monitor these areas against the subject Action Plan and School Development Plan (SDP).

## **2.3 Resources**

Resources are centrally kept in the Chapel, the resource cupboard and the Head's Office and are regularly updated. Each Key Stage has a box of resources which they can use for class worship and displays.

## **3.0 Right to withdraw**

Whilst all parents have the right to withdraw their child from collective worship, the school will seek to enter into discussions to ascertain the reasons for the request, and determine strategies to work around this for the benefit of the child, on the basis of the schools mission for tolerance and mutual respect. 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.

**Equality Impact Assessment -Groups that may be affected:**

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact x or n.a.
<b>Age</b> (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		x
<b>Disability</b> (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)		
<b>Gender reassignment</b> (transsexual)		x
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>		x
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>		x
<b>Racial groups</b> (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)		x
<b>Religion or belief</b> (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)		x
<b>Gender</b> (male, female)		x
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (gay, lesbian, bisexual; actual or perceived)		x