

St. John the Baptist R.C. Primary School

Worship policy



Approved by: Lisa Campbell

Date: 1.3.25

Last reviewed on: 1.3.25

Next review due by: 1.3.27

Our vision

We wish every child to discover their own sense of spirituality and be equipped and able to express it personally and as a part of our faith community.

Context

We have a Worship structure which enables pupils to be confident and secure in their own religious faith, as well as being knowledgeable and respectful of other religions, thus playing a key role in building a cohesive society. Ethnic and racial diversity is, and always has been, a feature of the Catholic Church's transnational presence, identity and membership. Here at St John the Baptist RC Primary School, this ethnic and racial diversity finds unity in religious faith and produces the shared core human values which contribute to authentic social cohesion.

In our multi-faith community, our shared core values, which promote respect for the rights and dignity of every human person are essential for social cohesion. Social cohesion and serving the community has been the biggest impact of our actions.

Fundamental British Values, along with the need for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our children, are key points to education in all of British schools. At St John the Baptist RC Primary School, whilst not definitive, we teach the Gospel values based on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12) to strengthen values and developments. As people of God, we are people of love and respect. Respect for all is something embedded at St John the Baptist RC Primary School and within our community. St John the Baptist RC Primary School is a community with Christ at the centre. Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of the community life of the Catholic school. They are essential to the Catholic life and mission of the school, in a manner that is appropriate for the distinct educational setting of our school. Bishop Arnold stressed the important role that faith schools play in promoting inter-religious dialogue and integration. "From a Catholic viewpoint, we're duty-bound by our ethos to welcome other cultures and foster understanding. As Pope Francis would say, it's about putting faith into action.

Mission Statement

Our school is a welcoming, Catholic community, with Christ at the centre.

love of learning
and playing together
one community
aiming high
helping each other
and praying together

On our journey with Christ

Through worship, we come together to listen and speak to God, to spread the Gospel message and to move forward in faith together.

As **"One Family in Christ"**; we work together with respect, understanding, honesty and joy, to develop love, tolerance and justice for all.

We strive for greatness in our learning, we develop our unique talents and each day we take pride in all our efforts and achievements.

Worship policy – To love You more dearly

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 into relationship, made possible through the work of Jesus Christ and the witness of the Holy Spirit. The quality of the prayer and liturgy in school not only gives honour to God but forms the spiritual and ethical life of pupils and staff alike.

We celebrate that our community at St John the Baptist RC Primary School is inclusive of families who are not Catholics or Christians. We strive to present, in an authentic way, our tradition of Catholic prayer and liturgy, while at the same time providing a welcoming environment for all pupils and staff. In order to respond to this most fruitfully, we are called to understand the tradition of the Catholic faith and maintain an approach that respects the integrity of all members of the school community.

We do this through:

1. Enabling children to make choices when participating in prayer and liturgy
2. Recognising similarities in the different faiths and discussing these
3. Recognising differences in the different faiths and discussing these
4. Celebrating the events in the liturgical year and incorporating all faiths with parents
5. Ensuring prayer spaces are accessible and resourced for all faiths
6. Inviting parents in to observe our Celebration of the Word sessions

Legal Requirements

We acknowledge the legal requirement that there must be a daily act of worship for all pupils. This can take place at any time during the school day and can be either a single act of worship for all pupils, or separate acts of worship in school groups. We acknowledge that worship and assembly are distinct activities. They may sometimes form part of the same gathering, but the difference between the two will always be made clear.

The act of worship is not designated curriculum time under regulations and will not be classified under any part of the curriculum, including Religious Education.

The Place of Worship in the Life of our School

We endorse the belief that Worship 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, or none
- Those from other faith backgrounds

It will be an educational activity or experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain. Worship in this school is an integral part of school life and central to our Catholic tradition.

The Aims of Worship

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

We believe that Worship in our school will provide a variety of opportunities to deepen our relationships with God and develop the following:-

To contemplate the mystery of God;

To unite our worshipping Eucharistic community;

To develop the necessary skills of:

- Reflection
- Reverence
- Contemplation
- Interpretation
- Empathy
- Meditation

Which will enable our relationships with God to be deepened.

Full participation in our faith will allow us:-

To grow in spiritual, moral, cultural and liturgical understanding;

To grow in understanding of our living faith tradition;

To develop a sense of awe, wonder and inspiration in the person of Christ;

To examine and reflect upon our own individual faith journeys;

To develop the skills of praying in all its differing forms.

Principles

All Acts of Worship in this school will:

- Give glory and honour to God
- Give everyone opportunities for personal reflection
- Be a quality experience, 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

Daily Prayer in Classes

Each class has its own altar/focal point for collective worship. Prayers include:

- Morning prayer
- Grace before meals
- Prayers at the end of the day
- Prayer progression (see separate document)

Celebration of the Eucharist

We believe that The Mass is the ultimate expression of our existence as a faith community. It therefore it takes a central place in school life.

We celebrate Mass regularly with parishioners.

We have whole school Masses throughout the school year, celebrating different Feast Days and Holy Days. Pupils take a fully active part in preparation, reading and serving.

Advent

We prepare for the season of Advent throughout school by preparing the Altars with purple cloth and introducing the Advent liturgy bag which is sent home with a different family each day during Advent and into January. The aim is to bring parents closer to the faith life of the school and the Church. The children plan and record their home liturgies to share with the class, if they wish to.

Lent

Holy Week celebrations are an integral part of our school celebration and prayer life. Lenten prayer bags are sent home to mark this special time of year, these include figures, prayers and reflections and different books based on the Easter story.

Key Stage 2 prepare and deliver a Stations of the Cross reflection for their parents and the whole school.

Pentecost

Pentecost is a whole school celebration where we encourage children to reflect on and celebrate the birth of the Church. We involve the whole community in a variety of ways, for example a Pentecost Parade or a Pentecost Party. There is always a worship to celebrate this time of year.

The Planning, Content and Delivery of the Celebration of the Word

Celebrations of the Word are planned:

- To develop in pupils skills that enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship rather than always participating or contributing in a token way.
- To be spontaneous and meaningful. Emphasis is on active participation.
- With flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community

The format for Celebration of the Word takes two different forms on different days:

1: Whole school and class celebration of the Word

- ❖ **We Gather** – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)
- ❖ **We Listen** – every worship will centre around at least one text from the Bible or a piece of Scripture
- ❖ **We Respond** – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (dance, music, drama, art, poetry etc.) We place our needs before God (prayers of intercession.)
- ❖ **We Go Forth** – Giving the children something to hold on to from the experience of the liturgy that they can take into their daily lives.

The progression of Celebration of the Word is carefully considered and builds on from children's prior experiences. This is led by children from the Worship team in the hall.

Recording

Celebration of the Word is recorded:

- Through whole school and class Twitter
- In the newsletter

2. Meditative prayer (Lectio Divina)

- ❖ **Reading** – how we come together silently, the scripture is read by the children, children following with eyes closed and thinking deeply about the words that capture their interest from the Scripture
- ❖ **Meditation** – children put themselves into the scene, children see things through the eyes of the people in the stories and imagine how they feel, children consider what God wants to say to them
- ❖ **Prayer** – Children use their own words to have a heart to heart conversation with God, speak and listen, listen and reflect. This done silently. Children are invited to respond with a voiced spontaneous prayer should they wish.
- ❖ **Contemplation** – Reflective and prayerful silence to enjoy being in God's presence.

Progression in Lectio Divina

The progression of meditation is carefully considered throughout the school and builds on from children's prior experiences.

KS1	LKS2	UKS2
Worship Team lay out altar with help Children listen to scripture read by Worship Team All children take part in reflective silence for short periods.	Worship Team set up altar independently Worship Team prepare reading and lead meditation independently. Children spontaneously voice prayers. All children take part in reflective silence for longer periods.	Worship Team set up altar independently, being increasingly creative. Worship Team select reading and prayers from a variety of sources (Bible, books, workbooks, web etc.) Worship Team compose probing questions to enable children to think deeper. Children's spontaneous prayers become increasingly detailed in what they are asking for, the reasons why and what they want the outcome to be. Worship Team match prayers and readings with a given theme. Children invent own symbolic actions. Class spend increasing amounts of time in silence.

Recording

Meditations are recorded:

- Through displays, collections of pupils' contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, videos
- In Class worship books
- Through whole school and class Twitter
- In newsletters

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. Feedback is shared with staff.

Resources

Each class has its own collection of Worship resources. A main supply is maintained by the RE lead and is available at all times.

Timetable

KS1 and KS2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Gospel Assembly – whole school	Lectio Divina – whole school	Celebration of the Word – whole school	Celebration of the Word in classes	Celebration of Talents – whole school
Mrs Campbell	Child led	Child led	Child led	Mrs Campbell or SLT

EYFS Timetable

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
In class – discover Gather with music, sign of the cross, sing • Start with a question that makes the child think about their own life. • Share scripture from the Bible. • Draw out the key message. • Sing a song together • Say a simple prayer Class Teacher	In class – reflect Gather with music, sign of the cross, sing • Open with a song • Use object to briefly remind children about yesterday's worship • Re-read with less unpicking • Children reflect on what they understand – silent. Eyes closed • Say a simple prayer together. Class Teacher	In class - apply Gather with music, sign of the cross, sing • Recap the scripture and key message for the week. • Link the story and message back to the lives of the children. • Invite children to be quiet and think about the message in a prayer time. • Close with a song Class Teacher	In class – singing worship Gather with music, sign of the cross, sing • Teach the children a worship song. • Discuss what it means and why we might sing it. • Invite children to say what they would like to pray for. Say prayers. Class Teacher	Celebration of Talents Mrs Campbell or SLT

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Worship lead and the Headteacher and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every year.

L. Campbell
March 2025

