



Prayer and Liturgy Policy

Spring 2023



Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales under company registration number: 07696069 and registered address: St. Alban's Catholic Academy, First Avenue, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2NP.

Our Lady of Fatima Multi Academy Trust Prayer and Liturgy Policy

The Nature of Prayer and Liturgy

We believe that Christian worship in a Catholic school names and celebrates God's presence in our lives. It 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 celebration of Catholic liturgies and prayers as an integral part of the learning and teaching should enable the school community to become reflective, experience the presence of God and should develop a mature spiritual life.'*¹

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 understand that simply holding an assembly that includes a prayer, said either by the teacher or everyone present, does not fulfil this requirement. We also acknowledge that prayer, liturgy and assemblies 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 subsumed under any part of the curriculum, including religious education.

In this school responsibility for arranging prayer and liturgy rests with the each school leader, after consultation with the Executive Headteacher.

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from prayer and liturgy. However, given the importance of prayer and liturgy in a Catholic school, parents and prospective parents will 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, within Come and See - Religious Education curriculum.

The Place of Prayer and Liturgy in the Life of the schools within the schools in the Trust

Collective Worship (prayer and liturgy) in our school is more than just a legal requirement. It is an integral part of school life and central to the Catholic tradition.

We endorse the belief that 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 – or none;
- Those from other faith backgrounds.
- It will be an educational activity or experience in which all can contribute, and from which all can gain.

¹ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

The Aims of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy within the schools in the Trust contributes to the social, cultural, and moral development of our pupils. It aims to provide opportunities for all pupils and staff:

- To create and promote the overall Catholic ethos of the school;
- To encourage children to realise that we are 'the Church';
- To contemplate the mystery of God;
- To give the children the opportunity to pray, express, reflect, grow, understand, reconcile, praise and experience;
- To pray using prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition
- That children experience Mass as an educative process on their spiritual pilgrimage through life.
- 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 grow in liturgical understanding and development
- 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 within the schools in the Trust will:

- Give glory and honour to God;
- Be a quality activity, fundamental to the life of the school and its Catholic character;
- Enable pupils to develop skills so that they can prepare, organise and lead worship;
- 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.²

In order to do this, celebrations will:

- Be kept short and appropriately paced
- Be simple, including a range of experiences offered in a variety of groupings and in a variety of settings
- Celebrations will be appropriate to the age and groupings of the children.

Planning, content and celebration

Prayer and liturgy is planned following a structure with reference to the Church's seasons, Come and See, house and school feast days, the curriculum and significant dates e.g. CAFOD Family Fast Day, Holocaust Memorial Day.

Parish and parents are invited to participate in some celebrations.

² Directory for Masses with Children, paragraph 9.

A variety of prayer styles will be used appropriate to the age of the children and the occasion.

Example - Prayer and Liturgy Timetable (slight adaptation between schools may occur)		
Monday	9.05am	Whole School – Gospel Assembly
Tuesday	10.00am	Singing Assembly
Wednesday	9.05am	KS1 assembly
Wednesday	10.45 am	KS2 assembly
Thursday		Classroom Worship
Friday	9.05am	Whole School Assembly

Occasionally a Wednesday Assembly may be swapped with a House team assembly

Prayer and liturgy is planned:

- Following a structure with reference to the Church’s liturgical year and seasons, ‘Come and See’, significant dates and the curriculum. Scripture will be the focus in most acts of worship;
- It will relate to the school community in the light of the school’s aims and Mission;
- There will be flexibility to respond to changing situations within the school and the wider community;
- We aim to teach children the skills to enable them to prepare, organise and lead worship.

The format for Prayer and liturgy for our schools within the Trust will be:

- ❖ **Gather** – how we come together, the setting, the environment (quiet reflective music, lighted candles, icons etc.)
- ❖ **Proclaim** – most liturgies will centre around at least one text from the bible. The Word of God will be proclaimed from the Bible or lectionary whenever possible.
- ❖ **Respond** – The response to the Word may lead into a time of ritual action or communal prayer. The ritual action may vary (dance, drama, art, poetry etc.) We place our needs before God. (Intercessory Prayers)
- ❖ **Go forth** – giving the children something to hold onto from the experience of the liturgy that they take into their lives.

Recording

Prayer and liturgy is recorded:

- On a liturgy planner to keep note of themes, leaders, pupil groupings and resources
- Through displays, collections of pupil’s contributions, prayers, reflections, photographs, video etc.
- Each class has a Prayer and liturgy book in their class. This is used to record the acts of classroom worship that the pupils have planned and led.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout the year, the schools’ provision for worship will be evaluated to consider whether it meets the needs of pupils and whether it truly reflects the aims and mission of the school.

Monitoring of Prayer and liturgy will be in line with that stated in the RE Policy, through observations of the different types of Prayer and liturgy practiced across the school.

Resources

There are many resources available for the planning of Prayer and liturgy – audio and visual resources (music and video clips), books including bibles, prayer books and themed stories plus religious artefacts such as icons. (See RE Co-ordinator)

Equal Opportunities

We believe that all children are entitled to equal access to the varied forms of Prayer and liturgy regardless of gender, race, cultural or social background. Prayer and liturgy is one of the highest order activities of the human race, i.e. the quest for God. It should, therefore, always promote values of respect, equality and reverence for all people, everywhere, whether or not they have faith.

The learning environment

‘Symbols and icons of the Catholic faith when displayed in school and throughout its premises will help the school community and visitors to experience the uniqueness and sacredness of this learning environment’³

Focal points in each classroom and throughout both schools will reflect the liturgical season and will reference Come and See topics. In this way they will be an outward sign of the schools’ ethos.

The School House System

On entry to school children are divided into houses, and remain in these houses for the duration of their time at school. Children meet in their house groups once each half term for Prayer and liturgy and to learn more about their saint. Each house saint’s day will be celebrated in their respective house groups.

Other opportunities

- A Carol Service/Advent Liturgy celebrated at the end of the Autumn Term
- The Stations of the Cross are observed once a week through Lent.
- Through May and October the Rosary is prayed once a week before the start of school.
- Our Lady of Fatima Feast Day is celebrated on 13 May
- Ash Wednesday service.
- KS2 Penitential Services during Advent and Lent.
- An Easter Service is celebrated at the end of the Spring Term which is performed by years three and four.
- House System opportunities for Prayer and Liturgy

Eucharist

³ Christ at the Centre Rev Marcus Stock, 2005

Eucharistic celebrations in school/parish will highlight a special occasion and form a very important part of our Prayer and liturgy strategy. Opportunities for children to participate are maximised and parents and other members of the Parish community are encouraged to attend.

The celebrations will take the following forms:

- Whole School Masses
- Class Masses and liturgies
- Holy Days of Obligation (SS Peter and Paul)
- Deanery Mass
- We come together as a partnership of schools to celebrate the start of the new academic year
- Going Forth Mass – for the children who have just received their First Holy Communion
- School Feast Day Mass
- Class/Year Group Masses
- Leavers’ Mass
- KS2 Reconciliation
- Easter

A Progression of Prayers

Children are taught many prayers during their time at school and by the end of Key Stage 2 we would expect our children to know the prayers stated in the Diocesan publication ‘Prayer in Primary and Secondary Schools’ Which can be found on TEAMS
 Whilst it is preferable (especially in KS1) to have a ‘class prayer,’ other prayers must be taught throughout the school year.

Children should learn the following prayers by heart by the end of Key Stage 2:

Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our Father ● Hail Mary ● Morning offering ● Grace before and after Meals ● Evening prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hail Holy Queen ● The Angelus ● The Magnificat ● The Apostles’ Creed ● The Confiteor ● The Gloria

Prayer time should include an extended period of reflection (silence)

The Co-ordination of Prayer and Liturgy

Prayer and liturgy is co-ordinated by the Head of School who is the school’s Spiritual Lead. in consultation with the Executive Headteacher. Liaison with the Parish Priest will be arranged when appropriate.

Extract from the Staff Handbook referencing Prayer and Liturgy
Prayer, Liturgy, and Assemblies

When we decided to appoint you, we took account of your response about how you would support the ethos of the school as well as your professional qualifications and experience. As a result, we expect everyone to hold to the interview promise and be supportive of the Christian ethos of our school. All staff are expected to participate in school-based liturgies, masses and prayer activities.

Assemblies and Acts of Collective worship takes place at the following times:

Monday	Gospel Assembly
Tuesday	Infant/Junior Assembly – on rota
Wednesday	Music Assembly– St Alban’s House Meeting – St Luke’s
Thursday	House Meeting – St Alban’s or Classroom worship Music Assembly – St Luke’s
Friday	Celebration Assembly or Class Assembly

Monday Assembly – Whole school focus – Gospel – significant feast – Liturgical reflections on Sundays Gospel. All staff should be in attendance

Tuesday Key Stage Assembly – based on advised topics

Thursday House Assembly – 10 meetings in the year as advised

Wednesday/Thursday Music Assembly – Music for masses to be taught (also reflected in Key Stage Assembly/Monday assembly)

Friday Assembly – Celebration or Class Assembly on rota

Any certificates or other items are to be distributed during Friday assembly, these must be given well in advance to whoever is leading the assembly.

Silence is expected entering and exiting the hall and during Assembly. This is important for both children and adults. Please do not speak to the person leading the assembly unless absolutely necessary.

Teachers to remain present during Hymn Practice/singing assembly.

Masses and Liturgies

Masses are usually celebrated on Holy Days and Feast days and other celebratory days in the academic year. Where possible the whole school attend Mass/services, including all members of staff, (unless supervising children not attending Mass and those covering the office) - LSAs must not be allocated other tasks and PPA is postponed during these times. Masses on Holy Days are Parish Masses and members of the public may also attend.

The RE co-ordinator is **not** responsible for organising the Mass, however they may assist others in organising the readings, the bidding prayers and servers. As this is a public mass the children must practice the readings and be well organised.

Key Stage 2 have class masses within the parish church or school. The children are expected to participate and choose the hymns. Children read and write the bidding prayers. The R.E. lead/spiritual lead will provide support where needed.

Reception and Key Stage One have class prepared prayer services. The children are expected to be fully involved in preparing these with a clear link to scripture.

Children are expected to have outstanding behaviour in Mass and receive the Eucharist (if they have made their First Holy Communion) with respect. Staff must sit with their class to

supervise them unless otherwise directed. Before a Mass or Liturgy, the school's expectations with regard to behaviour and the appropriate way to receive communion must be communicated to the children. Furthermore, children who are not Catholic must be reminded how to receive a blessing (arm across the chest). They must not attempt to receive the Blessed Sacrament.

Each teacher should lead a Class Mass/Prayer service per term.

At the beginning of each term the Spiritual Lead meets with the Parish Priest to plan the liturgies for the forthcoming term. A programme is then established and published on the notice board.

Parents are invited to some Masses and Liturgies.

Prayers

Whilst it is preferable (especially in KS1) to have a 'class prayer,' other prayers must be taught throughout the school year.

Children should learn the following prayers by heart by the end of Key Stage 2:

Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Father • Hail Mary • Morning offering • Grace before and after Meals • Evening prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hail Holy Queen • The Angelus • The Magnificat • The Apostles' Creed • The Confiteor • The Gloria

Prayer time should include an extended period of reflection (silence)

At the end of each topic, prayer should include the act of collective worship as offered by Come and See.

Class Saints

At the start of the new academic year class teachers are asked to choose a class saint to represent their class for the year. This saint is shared with the class and represented in a poster on the class door with a picture, name, what they are a patron saint of and dates that they lived. During the year, through class worship and RE children find out more about their saint's life and the values they lived by. This in turn will inspire our pupils to live lives like saints.

Appendix 1

The Role of the Spiritual Lead and RE co-ordinator for Prayer and Liturgy

- Formulating a written policy for Prayer and Liturgy
- Ensuring that there is a development plan for Prayer and Liturgy included in the school development plan
- Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy is appropriate to the age, aptitudes and faith backgrounds of pupils
- Ensuring that Prayer and Liturgy takes account of the religious and educational needs of all who share in it and is rooted in the principles of the 'Directory for Masses with Children'
- Organising themes for Worship
- Assisting the governors and Executive Headteacher to carry out their legal responsibilities with regard to Prayer and Liturgy
- Developing staff confidence and expertise e.g. through modelling different prayer styles

Planning, recording, monitoring and evaluating

- Maintaining and developing effective procedures and documentation
- Observing Acts of Prayer and Liturgy and providing feedback
- Informing the Executive Headteacher of standards and developments in Prayer and Liturgy

Communication

- Communicating to members of the school community the significance and content of Prayer and Liturgy
- Reporting to and consulting with the governors and Executive Headteacher regarding matters of concern and development
- Acting as consultant to colleagues
- Encouraging positive attitudes towards Prayer and Liturgy
- Informing newly appointed colleagues of school policy regarding Prayer and Liturgy
- Communicating with parents, governors and the parish community
- Liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education

Professional development / On-going formation

- Leading and organising in-service training and on-going formation for Prayer and Liturgy
- Attending appropriate in-service courses, reporting back and leading staff training
- Keeping up to date by personal reading

Resources

- Evaluating existing resources
- Developing the resources available for Prayer and Liturgy including visual aids, artefacts, drapes, music, visitors, leaders, new and relevant books, posters etc.
- Budgeting efficiently