

Our Mission 'Led by Christ, we learn and grow together in God's family'.  
Our vision is for the children 'to be the best they can be'.



## Our Lady of Victories Catholic Primary School Prayer & Liturgy Policy

### Aims of prayer and liturgy at Our Lady of Victories School

Jesus Christ is central to every aspect of school life at Our Lady of Victories. We aim to be a living, loving and sacramental community, inspired by the life of Christ and the teachings of the Church. We hope that from the minute you enter our school you clearly see and feel that we are a Catholic community, rooted in Gospel values. Prayer and liturgy in its many forms are a central part of our ethos, as we celebrate and deepen our faith and our relationship with God in the daily life of the school.

Staff ensure that children are provided with opportunities to develop their spirituality and a close relationship with God through acts of worship. These may take the form of a collective act of worship with the whole school community or separate acts of worship in school/class groups. Prayer and Liturgy in our school are an integral part of our ethos and Christian values permeate all aspects of school life and all relationships

Our school serves two parishes, Our Lady of Victories and Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Simon Stock. While close links are maintained with these two parishes, children also attend other local parishes, including the Servites and the Oratory. These varied parish / school links mean that it is even more important that the school itself stands as a strong community of faith for the children and their families, not all of whom are practising Catholics.

We aim to:

- To develop an awareness and understanding of the presence of God in each individual child's life and to encourage a personal response to that presence.
- To allow each child to develop their conscience and make sound moral judgements based on a commitment to following Christ.
- To offer children opportunities to deepen their faith and foster attitudes of care and respect for each other and the world which God created.
- To develop the school as a community of faith where all of its members experience and understand the liturgical life of the Church.
- To promote the sacramental life of children who are participating in the sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion in their parishes, celebrating these important steps with them.

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- To foster school-parish links to ensure that our children are committed to the Catholic faith, experiencing liturgy and worship beyond the school provision.
- To enable each child to participate and respond to liturgy and worship.

### The Liturgical Calendar

We ensure that pupils are aware of the Liturgical Calendar and key events in the life of the Church. The symbolism of colours is made clear: purple for penance (seen during Advent and Lent), red for The Holy Spirit and martyrdom (seen at Pentecost), white, gold for important feasts, green for the ordinary times of the year and blue is associated with Mary.

As Our Blessed Lady is our school patron, during May a Mass is celebrated for Mary's feast day and during October, the month of the Rosary. At other key times in the liturgical calendar, such as Advent and Lent we prepare additional liturgical experiences, associated with the season. For example, during Lent the children participate in the Stations of the Cross and those children who can do so receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### Masses and seasonal liturgies

Mass is regularly celebrated in school, one of the priests from the two associated parishes coming into school to do so. The RE lead supports children and teachers in preparing and participating in the Mass, in order that to ensure that it is a meaningful and a joyful experience. Mass can be a whole school celebration or said for an individual class. Parents are invited to join us.

Throughout the liturgical year other acts of worship are arranged to take place in school, such as the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and the receiving of ashes on Ash Wednesday. We are grateful to the priests of our parishes who take the additional time to come to school to celebrate, as we are some distance from both churches. Occasionally we visit the parish church to celebrate in acts of worship, such as Benediction and Adoration with upper key stage 2 children during Lent and a whole school Christmas Carol service during Advent.

### Prayer & Liturgy

A daily act of collective worship is central to the Christ-centred ethos and mission of our school. Worship in our school is concerned with giving glory, honour, praise and thanks to God. Each act of worship follows the four-fold action of Gathering, hearing God's Word, Responding to the Word and being sent forward with a Mission based on the worship we have participated in.

We gather together as a school community for whole school collective worship on a Monday and a Friday. On Mondays, worship is led by one of the senior leaders, based on the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday. There is also an opportunity to learn new hymns, based on the liturgies coming up and to practice hymns known to children in

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preparation for assemblies.

On Fridays, classes take turns to lead a whole school or a key phase act of worship. These are always linked to the liturgical seasons and often draw upon and celebrate what children are learning in RE lessons. They could be linked to Christian values and virtues or to a Catholic Social Teaching theme. Parents are invited to join us for these and are always very supportive.

On those Friday's where a class is not time-tabled to lead an assembly, the Head-Teacher leads the collective worship. Once a half term this is used as an opportunity to celebrate our achievements and successes in a 'Gold Book' assembly. Children's successes, particularly in the aspects of their personal development and how they are living out their faith, are celebrated and their names go into the Head-Teacher's Gold Book. They also receive a certificate and a letter is sent to their parents, sharing their success.

On Tuesday we have class worship led by teachers. The RE subject lead ensures that staff are aware of where they can access resources to use for these.

On Wednesday and Thursday, the Young Missionaries lead worship in each class, which follows the Gather, Listen, Respond and Mission format. Pupils in the Young Missionary are trained, then given the responsibility of planning, delivering and evaluating these acts of Collective Worship. The RE subject lead supports them in preparing this.

Each classroom has a dedicated prayer area which is the class focus for prayers at regular intervals throughout the day, such as before the midday meal and at the end of the day.

### Monitoring

The Deputy Head-teacher and RE lead is responsible for the monitoring of prayer and liturgy. She will involve other members of staff on a regular basis for their own professional development.

### Inclusion and Equal Opportunities at Our Lady of Victories

We ensure that liturgy and prayer is inclusive to all members of the school community. Pupils with SEND are supported and encouraged to participate fully. We have several non Catholic or non practising children who attend liturgies and are encouraged to participate and to take what they can from the experience.

Children of another faith who are practising are supported by teachers who explain what is happening and to ensure that they are comfortable with their involvement. Muslims for instance are not required to make the sign of the cross but may, if they choose, make a similar sign to bless themselves.

### Health & Safety

As part of prayer and worship we always light a candle, which represents the presence of Jesus. In the early years and key stage 1 we use electric candles but in key stage 2

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candles with naked flames are used with due caution. We never allow children to do this unless supervised and pupils are never left in close proximity to a lit flame. Staff are advised to be careful to blow candles out in classrooms promptly after an RE lesson or a prayer service.

Adopted by Governing Body: March 2023

Review date: Summer 2024