



HFCS

Worship and Liturgy Policy
January 2024

1. Our School Mission Statement

“Holy Family is a Catholic community, embracing the clear Christian values of respect, service and justice.

We are a family of many cultures sharing one faith. We exist to educate all young people towards excellence in all dimensions of their lives, recognising the uniqueness of each and the equality of all.”

2. Statutory Requirements

The law requires all maintained schools:

- To provide daily collective worship for all pupils including in the sixth form (section 70, 1988 Education Act)
- To ensure that acts of collective worship are to be in addition to designated curriculum time. In the context of the Catholic school this means that time of collective worship is not considered to be part of the allocation of curriculum for Religious Education
- To recognise and respect that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from Collective Worship

In addition Foundation Governors in voluntary aided Catholic schools have a statutory responsibility to preserve and develop the religious character of their schools.

3. Rationale

In our school however, it is more than just a legal requirement.

At Holy Family, worship and liturgy is an integral part of school life, not only because it contributes to building up the school's ethos but because it is an essential source of human formation. Prayer and worship, in the Catholic tradition, are not concerned with making us more religious but more human: *‘I came so that they may have life, life to the full.’* (John 10:10)

4. Prayer, Liturgy and Collective Worship

The aim of Prayer, Liturgy and Collective Worship in our school is to provide the space and tools for our young people:

- to contemplate the mystery of God;
- to develop an understanding of Salvation History through meaningful engagement with the Eucharist and the sacrament of Reconciliation;
- to reflect on spiritual and moral issues;

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- to foster and nurture relationships;
- to respond to and to celebrate life;
- to experience a sense of belonging and to develop community;
- to nurture a common ethos and shared set of values;
- to enrich religious experience;
- to grow in liturgical understanding and development;
- to reinforce prayers which are part of the Catholic tradition;
- to seek appropriate responses to the love of God;
- to take time out 'to wonder at', 'to come to terms with' and 'to give worth to.'

Daily Prayer

All members of staff are responsible for nurturing our shared Catholic values and faith. At the heart of our faith lies the belief in a God who communicates with His people. Our relationship with God, akin to any meaningful connection, flourishes through communication and prayer serves as the conduit for this dialogue. We believe that prayer is essential to human fulfilment, as it is within God's embrace that we unearth our true selves, our purpose, and our meaning.

Prayer consists of:

- listening - being attentive to the voice of God in every moment of life.
- speaking - expressing our heart's deepest longings and desires to the One who knows and understands us better than we know and understand ourselves.
- reflecting - thinking about our relationship with God. Pondering on the actions of God in history and in the unfolding mystery of our lives.
- resting – simply being consciously in the presence of God, knowing that we are loved unconditionally.

Our daily routine at Holy Family embraces prayer as an integral part of our collective activities. Each morning, prayer initiates our staff briefings and Form time sessions. Furthermore, prayer starts each lesson, sets the tone for staff INSET days, Governors' meetings, and SLT meetings. We actively promote an environment where voluntary and private prayer is welcomed for both students and staff.

Our school prayer embodies our core values of achievement, service, participation, integrity, responsibility, and equity. Additionally, the start-of-lesson prayer seeks calmness, attentiveness, knowledge, and discipleship. We supplement these prayers

with traditional Catholic prayers, feature them in our school journal, and encourage students to engage with God in their own personal way.

We prioritise teaching and explaining prayers through RE lessons, ensuring inclusion and understanding, especially for our non-Catholic pupils.

The school chapel, on Wiseman Site, is open to everyone for quiet prayer and reflection. It can be accessed by all at all times of the day. Resources for personal prayer and reflection are available in the chapel. Resources for the planning, leading and delivery of prayer and liturgy can also be found in the chapel and in the RE department.

On Walthamstow House Site we have the Emmaus Room. It was on the road to Emmaus, on Easter Sunday, that Jesus appeared to two of his disciples who were discussing his passion and death. Our Emmaus Room is less formal than our chapel and it is a room in which students can use as a place to meet and to pray. By spending time together in this way, the chaplain is able to accompany many of our students quietly and walk with them through the difficult moments of their school career in much the same way that Jesus taught his disciples to; with love, compassion and quiet care.

Liturgy and Collective Worship

At the heart of our school's Catholic identity is our commitment to shared acts of worship, prayer, and liturgy, fostering opportunities for students and staff to unite in response to God's call for unity.

Weekly, each student from Year 7 to Year 13 participates in a dedicated Celebration of The Word assembly, distinct from their year group assembly. These sessions follow a consistent structure:

- Gathering together.
- Engaging with Scripture readings.
- Responding to the Word of God.
- Reflecting on the Scripture's message and contemplating its application in our words and actions.

Each Celebration of the Word assembly:

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- Is planned by students in their form groups, supported by their form tutor and guided by the school chaplain, who ensures theological accuracy and supports meaningful prayer and reflection.
- Encourages active student participation and provides valuable opportunities for leadership, creativity, and spiritual growth within worship.
- Seeks to foster meaningful engagement, inspiring students to live out their faith through action, in line with our ASPIRE values and school motto: *'Aspire not to have more but to be more.'*

Each Celebration of The Word assembly must:

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross and with our school's ASPIRE prayer
- Follow the Liturgical Calendar and have Sunday's Gospel reading as its central focus. The Gospel should be read by a person of the Christian faith
- Provide a reflection on the Gospel making it relevant and relatable to our students and staff
- Include Bidding Prayers written by students or staff
- Finish with the Sign of the Cross

Before the assembly, students should gather in the designated area for their year group. Their form tutor will register them there, and this spot is also where they can address any notices, organisational matters, or uniform issues.

Students should enter the Main Hall quietly, without coats and with bags in hand. Heads of Year and senior staff will oversee the students' entry, behaviour, and departure.

At Holy Family, the Mass holds a central place in our school community. We strive to offer our students numerous chances to participate in Mass throughout their time here. Organising school masses at different times of the year is our goal, though this depends on the availability of local priests.

Within our school community, we engage in the sacramental aspects of the Church's liturgical life when we:

- Welcome Year 7 students and their parents with a Mass at the start of their journey at Holy Family.
- Celebrate the achievement of our Year 11 and Year 13 students with a Mass as they move onto the next stage of their journey.
- Commence the academic year with a staff Mass.

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- Observe Holy Days of Obligation.
- Attend Mass at our local parish in the church of Our Lady and St George alongside parishioners.
- Offer the sacrament of reconciliation during Advent and Lent, along with Eucharistic liturgies like Adoration.

Throughout the year we carefully follow the liturgical seasons. Special liturgies mark significant occasions at Christmas and Easter, involving students, staff, and parents. Our Catholic life calendar of events also includes the rosary in May and October, the Angelus during Lent, retreats, commemorations (e.g. Holocaust Day, Remembrance Day), and charity drives, all designed to foster deeper student engagement with the Catholic life of the school. Opportunities for involvement in the SVP group, CAFOD Young Leaders, School Prefect Team, and Liturgy Leaders further enrich students' connections with God and the school's Catholic ethos.

5. Resourcing

Faith Life has a distinct budget separate to the RE curriculum budget which is reflective of how important we view the Catholic life of the school.

6. Key Roles and Responsibilities

School Governor - Catholic Life

As set out in the Prayer and Liturgy Directory 2023 , it is the duty of governors of Catholic schools to direct the promotion, monitoring, and evaluation of prayer and liturgy through the following:

- Agreeing a specific prayer and liturgy policy which reflects the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Undertaking the periodic review of the policy and implementing any necessary amendments.
- Developing a knowledge and understanding of how prayer and liturgy are underpinned by the liturgical year.
- Understanding the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age and capacity of pupils, and ensuring a strategy is in place for building up these skills of participation as pupils progress through the school.
- Establishing that daily prayer and liturgy is provided for all staff and pupils.
- Participating in the school's prayer and liturgy, where this is practical.

- Ensuring there is professional development of all staff that focuses on liturgical formation and, for relevant staff, planning of prayer and liturgy.
- Overseeing the process for reviewing and reflecting, ensuring the voice of pupils is heard.
- Allocating sufficient financial budgeting.

Headteacher

The Headteacher ensures adherence to this policy and aligns collective worship with the school's overarching vision and mission. They directly oversee the Head of RE.

Senior Leader - Catholic Life

This role oversees the implementation of collective worship in line with the policy by:

- Creating the liturgical events calendar in collaboration with the School Chaplain.
- Ensuring staff conducting assemblies are well-informed about the policy and are provided with necessary guidance.
- Monitoring the quality of Collective Worship.

School Chaplain

Responsibilities of the School Chaplain encompass:

- Developing a programme of liturgies and Masses in accordance with the liturgical year and each year group's spiritual journey. Coordination of an annual whole-school Mass with the Head of RE and senior staff.
- Preparing Mass components, including music and multimedia presentations for student engagement.
- Organising opportunities for students to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.
- Coordinating logistics for Masses and liturgies, including space setup and booking.
- Leading a student Chaplaincy group for input into liturgical activities, forming readers, servers for Mass, and aiding IT and sound provisions.
- Engaging students in local service projects and supporting fundraising initiatives.
- Acting as a resource for staff seeking support for prayer times and faith-related queries regarding pupils.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The School Chaplain, the senior leader with responsibility for Catholic Life and the Catholic Life Working Party will monitor the provision of the various dimensions of worship and liturgy by reviewing plans and actions at regular intervals. Our provision will be evaluated by means of observations, questionnaires and by discussion with students, staff and parents. Worship and Liturgy will be scrutinised across the school year as part of our MER Cycle. The results of all evaluation should be reported to groups of interested parties and their suggestions sought for improvements. Governors will consider all such evaluations and suggestions before amending the policy. Governors remain ultimately responsible for the policy.